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# MEMOIRS

OF

# EMMA COURTNEY.

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VOL. I.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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OF

# EMMA COURTNEY.

BY MARY HAYS.

"The perceptions of perſons in retirement are very different from thoſe of people in the great world: their paſſions, being differently modified, are differently expreſſed; their imaginations, conſtantly impreſſed by the ſame objects, are more violently affected. The ſame ſmall number of images continually return, mix with every idea, and create thoſe ſtrange and falſe notions, ſo remarkable in people who ſpend their lives in ſolitude." ROUSSEAU.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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# PREFACE.

THE moſt intereſting, and the moſt uſeful, fictions, are, perhaps, ſuch, as delineating the progreſs, and tracing the conſequences, of one ſtrong, indulged, paſſion, or prejudice, afford materials, by which the philoſopher may calculate the powers of the human mind, and learn the ſprings which ſet it in motion——"Underſtanding, and talents," ſays Helvetius, "being nothing more, in men, than the produce of their deſires, and particular ſituations." Of the paſſion of terror Mrs. Radcliffe has made admi-

rable uſe in her ingenious romances.—In the novel of Caleb Williams, curioſity in the hero, and the love of reputation in the ſoul-moving character of Falkland, foſtered into ruling paſſions, are drawn with a maſterly hand.

For the ſubject of theſe Memoirs, a more univerſal ſentiment is choſen—a ſentiment hackneyed in this ſpecies of compoſition, conſequently more difficult to treat with any degree of originality;—yet, to accompliſh this, has been the aim of the author; with what ſucceſs, the public will, probably, determine.

Every writer who advances principles, whether true or falſe, that have a tendency to ſet the mind in motion, does good. Innumerable miſtakes

have been made, both moral and philoſophical:—while covered with a ſacred and myſterious veil, how are they to be detected? From various combinations and multiplied experiments, truth, only, can reſult. Free thinking, and free ſpeaking, are the virtue and the characteriſtics of a rational being:—there can be no argument which militates againſt them in one inſtance, but what equally militates againſt them in all; every principle muſt be doubted, before it will be examined and proved.

It has commonly been the buſineſs of fiction to pourtray characters, not as they really exiſt, but, as, we are told, they ought to be—a ſort of *ideal perfection*, in which nature and paſſion are melted away, and jarring attributes wonderfully combined.

In delineating the character of Emma Courtney, I had not in view theſe fantaſtic models: I meant to repreſent her, as a human being, loving virtue while enſlaved by paſſion, liable to the miſtakes and weakneſſes of our fragile nature.—Let thoſe readers, who feel inclined to judge with ſeverity the extravagance and eccentricity of her conduct, look into their own hearts; and ſhould they there find no record, traced by an accuſing ſpirit, to ſoften the aſperity of their cenſures—yet, let them bear in mind, that the errors of my heroine were the offspring of ſenſibility; and that the reſult of her hazardous experiment is calculated to operate as a *warning*, rather than as an example.—The philoſopher—who is not ignorant, that light and ſhade are more powerfully contraſted in minds riſing above

the common level; that, as rank weeds take ſtrong root in a fertile ſoil, vigorous powers not unfrequently produce fatal miſtakes and pernicious exertions; that character is the produce of a lively and conſtant affection—may, poſſibly, diſcover in theſe Memoirs traces of reflection, and of ſome attention to the phænomena of thehuman mind.

Whether the incidents, or the characters, are copied from life, is of little importance—The only queſtion is, if the *circumſtances*, and ſituations, are altogether improbable? If not—whether the conſequences *might* not have followed from the circumſtances?—— This is a grand queſtion, applicable to all the purpoſes of education, morals, and legiſlation——*and on this I reſt my moral*—" Do men gather figs of thorns,

or

or grapes of thiſtles?" aſked a moraliſt and a reformer.

Every *poſſible* incident, in works of this nature, might, perhaps, be rendered *probable*, were a ſufficient regard paid to the more minute, delicate, and connecting links of the chain. Under this impreſſion, I choſe, as the leaſt arduous, a ſimple ſtory—and, even in that, the fear of repetition, of prolixity, added, it may be, to a portion of indolence, made me, in ſome parts, neglectful of this rule:—yet, in tracing the character of my heroine from her birth, I had it in view. For the conduct of my hero, I conſider myſelf leſs reſponſible—it was not *his* memoirs that I profeſſed to write.

I am not ſanguine reſpecting the ſucceſs of this little publication. It is truly

truly obſerved, by the writer of a late popular novel*——"That an author, whether good or bad, or between both, is an animal whom every body is privileged to attack; for, though all are not able to write books, all conceive themſelves able to judge them. A bad compoſition carries with it its own puniſhment—contempt and ridicule:—a good one excites envy, and (frequently) entails upon its author a thouſand mortifications."

To the feeling and the thinking few, this production of an active mind, in a ſeaſon of impreſſion, rather than of leiſure, is preſented.

* The Monk.

MEMOIRS

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## OF
# EMMA COURTNEY.

### TO AUGUSTUS HARLEY.

RASH young man!——why do you tear from my heart the affecting narrative, which I had hoped no cruel neceſſity would ever have forced me to review?—Why do you oblige me to recall the bitterneſs of my paſt life, and to renew images, the remembrance of which, even at this diſtant period, harrows up my ſoul with inconceivable miſery?—But your happineſs is at ſtake, and every ſelfiſh conſideration vaniſhes.—Dear and ſacred depoſit of an adored and loſt friend!——for whoſe ſake I have conſented to hold down, with ſtruggling, ſuffocating reluctance, the loathed

and bitter portion of exiſtence;—ſhall I expoſe your ardent mind to the inceſſant conflict between truth and error—ſhall I practiſe the diſingenuouſneſs, by which my peace has been blaſted—ſhall I ſuffer you to run the wild career of paſſion—ſhall I keep back the recital, written upon my own mind in characters of blood, which may preſerve the child of my affections from deſtruction?

Ah! why have you deceived me?—Has a ſix months' abſence obliterated from your remembrance the precept I ſo earneſtly and inceſſantly laboured to inculcate—the value and importance of unequivocal ſincerity? A precept, which I now take ſhame to myſelf for not having more implicitly obſerved! Had I ſuppoſed your affection for Joanna more than a boyiſh partiality; had I not believed that a few months' abſence would entirely eraſe it from your remembrance; had I not been aſſured that her heart was devoted to another object, a circumſtance of which ſhe had herſelf frankly informed you; I ſhould not now have diſtruſted

your

your fortitude, when obliged to wound your feelings with the intelligence—that the woman, whom you have ſo wildly perſecuted, was, yeſterday, united to another.

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## TO THE SAME.

I RESUME my pen. Your letter, which Joanna a few days ſince put into my hands, has coſt me———Ah! my Auguſtus, my friend, my ſon——what has it not coſt me, and what impreſſions has it not renewed? I perceive the vigour of your mind with terror and exultation. But you are miſtaken! Were it not for the inſuperable barrier that ſeparates you, for ever, from your hopes, perſeverance itſelf, however active, however inceſſant, may fail in attaining its object. Your ardent reaſoning, my intereſting and philoſophic young friend, though not unconſequential, is a finely proportioned ſtructure, reſting on an airy foundation. The ſcience of morals is

not incapable of demonſtration, but we want a more extenſive knowledge of particular facts, on which, in any given circumſtance, firmly to eſtabliſh our data. —Yet, be not diſcouraged; exerciſe your underſtanding, think freely, inveſtigate every opinion, diſdain the ruſt of antiquity, raiſe ſyſtems, invent hypotheſes, and, by the abſurdities they involve, ſeize on the clue of truth. Rouſe the nobler energies of your mind; be not the ſlave of your paſſions, neither dream of eradicating them. Senſation generates intereſt, intereſt paſſion, paſſion forces attention, attention ſupplies the powers, and affords the means of attaining its end: in proportion to the degree of intereſt, will be that of attention and power. Thus are talents produced. Every man is born with ſenſation, with the aptitude of receiving impreſſions; the force of thoſe impreſſions depends on a thouſand circumſtances, over which he has little power; theſe circumſtances form the mind, and determine the future character. We are all the creatures of education,

tion; but in that education, what we call chance, or accident, has ſo great a ſhare, that the wiſeſt preceptor, after all his cares, has reaſon to tremble: one ſtrong affection, one ardent incitement, will turn, in an inſtant, the whole current of our thoughts, and introduce a new train of ideas and aſſociations.

You may perceive that I admit the general truths of your reaſoning; but I would warn you to be careful in their particular application; a long train of patient and laborious experiments muſt precede our deductions and concluſions. The ſcience of mind is not leſs demonſtrative, and far more important, than the ſcience of Newton; but we muſt proceed on ſimilar principles. The term *metaphyſics* has been, perhaps, juſtly defined—*the firſt principles of arts and ſciences.** Every diſcovery of genius, reſulting from a fortunate combination of circumſtances, may be reſolved into ſimple facts: but in this inveſtigation we muſt be patient, attentive, indefatigable; we muſt be content



* Helvetius.

to arrive at truth through many painful miſtakes and conſequent ſufferings.—— Such appears to be the conſtitution of man!

To ſhorten and meliorate your way, I have determined to ſacrifice every inferior conſideration. I have ſtudied your character: I perceive, with joy, that its errors are the ardent exceſſes of a generous mind. I loved your father with a fatal and unutterable tenderneſs: time has ſoftened the remembrance of his faults.— Our nobleſt qualities, without inceſſant watchfulneſs, are liable inſenſibly to ſhade into vices—but his virtues and *misfortunes*, in which my own were ſo intimately blended, are indelibly engraven on my heart.

A myſtery has hitherto hung over your birth. The victim of my own ardent paſſions, and the errors of one whoſe memory will ever be dear to me, I prepare to withdraw the veil——a veil, ſpread by an importunate, but, I fear, a miſtaken tenderneſs. Learn, then, from the incidents of my life, entangled with thoſe of his

his to whom you owe your exiſtence, a more ſtriking and affecting leſſon than abſtract philoſophy can ever afford.

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## CHAP. I.

THE events of my life have been few, and have in them nothing very uncommon, but the effects which they have produced on my mind; yet, that mind they have helped to form, and this in the eye of philoſophy, or affection, may render them not wholly unintereſting. While I trace them, they convince me of the irreſiſtible power of circumſtances, modifying and controuling our characters, and introducing, mechanically, thoſe aſſociations and habits which make us what we are; for without outward impreſſions we ſhould be nothing.

I know not how far to go back, nor where to begin; for in many caſes, it may

be in all, a foundation is laid for the operations of our minds, years—nay, ages—previous to our birth. I wiſh to be brief, yet to omit no one connecting link in the chain of cauſes, however minute, that I conceive had any important conſequences in the formation of my mind, or that may, probably, be uſeful to your's.

My father was a man of ſome talents, and of a ſuperior rank in life, but diſſipated, extravagant, and profligate. My mother, the daughter of a rich trader, and the ſole heireſs of his fortunes, allured by the ſpecious addreſs and faſhionable manners of my father, ſacrificed to empty ſhew the proſpect of rational and dignified happineſs. My father courted her hand to make himſelf maſter of her ample poſſeſſions: dazzled by vanity, and miſled by ſelf-love, ſhe married him;—found, when too late, her error; bitterly repented, and died in child bed the twelfth month of her marriage, after having given birth to a daughter, and commended it, with her dying breath, to the care of a ſiſter (the daughter of her

mother

mother by a former marriage), an amiable, ſenſible, and worthy woman, who had, a few days before, loſt a lovely and promiſing infant at the breaſt, and received the little Emma, as a gift from heaven, to ſupply its place.

My father, plunged in expence and debauchery, was little moved by theſe domeſtic diſtreſſes. He held the infant a moment in his arms, kiſſed it, and willingly conſigned it to the guardianſhip of its maternal aunt.

It will here be neceſſary to give a ſketch of the character, ſituation, and family, of this excellent woman; each of which had an important ſhare in forming the mind of her charge to thoſe diſpoſitions, and feelings, which irreſiſtibly led to the ſubſequent events.

## CHAP. II.

MR. and Mrs. Melmoth, my uncle and aunt, married young, purely

from motives of affection. Mr. Melmoth had an active, ardent, mind, great benevolence of heart, a ſweet and chearful temper, and a liberal manner of thinking, though with few advantages of education: he poſſeſſed, alſo, a ſanguine diſpoſition, a warm heart, a generous ſpirit, and an integrity which was never called in queſtion. Mrs. Melmoth's frame was delicate and fragile; ſhe had great ſenſibility, quickneſs of perception, ſome anxiety of temper, and a refined and romantic manner of thinking, acquired from the peruſal of the old romances, a large quantity of which, belonging to a relation, had, in the early periods of her youth, been accidentally depoſited in a ſpare room in her father's houſe. Theſe qualities were mingled with a devotional ſpirit, a little bordering on fanaticiſm. My uncle did not exactly reſemble an Orlando, or an Oroondates, but he was fond of reading; and having the command of a ſhip in the Weſt India trade, had, during his voyages in fine weather, time to indulge in this propenſity; by which

which means he was a tolerable proficient in the belles lettres, and could, on occaſion, quote Shakeſpeare, ſcribble poetry, and even philoſophize with Pope and Bolingbroke.

Mr. Melmoth was one-and-twenty, his bride nineteen, when they were united. They poſſeſſed little property; but the one was enterprizing and induſtrious, the other careful and œconomical; and both, with hearts glowing with affection for each other, ſaw cheering hope and fairy proſpects dancing before their eyes. Every thing ſucceeded beyond their moſt ſanguine expectations. My uncle's cheerful and ſocial temper, with the fairneſs and liberality of his dealings, conciliated the favour of the merchants. His underſtanding was ſuperior, and his manners more courteous, than the generality of perſons in his line of life: his company was eagerly courted, and no veſſel ſtood a chance of being freighted till his had its full cargo.

His voyages were not long, and frequent abſences and meetings kept alive

between him and my aunt, the hopes, the fears, the anxieties, and the tranſports of love. Their family ſoon increaſed, but this was a new ſource of joy to Mr. Melmoth's affectionate heart. A walk or a ride in the country, with his wife and little ones, he accounted his higheſt relaxation:—on theſe occaſions he gave himſelf up to a ſweet and lively pleaſure; would claſp them alternately to his breaſt, and, with eyes overflowing with tears of delight, repeat Thomſon's charming deſcription of the joys of virtuous love—

"Where nothing ſtrikes the eye but ſights of bliſs,
"All various nature preſſing on the heart!"

This was the firſt picture that ſtruck my young imagination, for I was, in all reſpects, conſidered as the adopted child of the family.

This proſperity received little other interruption than from my uncle's frequent abſences, and the pains and cares of my aunt in bringing into the world, and nurſing, a family of children. Mr. Melmoth's ſucceſs-

ſucceſsful voyages, at rather earlier than forty years of age, enabled him to leave the ſea, and to carry on an extenſive mercantile employment in the metropolis.—At this period his health began to be injured by the progreſs of a threatening internal diſorder; but it had little effect either on his ſpirits or activity. His buſineſs every day became wider, and his attention to it was unremitted, methodical, and indefatigable. His hours of relaxation were devoted to his family and ſocial enjoyment; at theſe times he never ſuffered the cares of the counting houſe to intrude;—he was the life of every company, and the ſoul of every pleaſure.

He at length aſſumed a more expenſive ſtyle of living; took a houſe in the country (for the charms of which he had ever a peculiar taſte) as a ſummer reſidence; ſet up an equipage, increaſed the number of his ſervants, and kept an open and hoſpitable, though not a luxurious, table.

The hours fled on downy pinions; his wife reſted on him, his children caught ſunſhine from his ſmiles; his domeſtics adored

adored him, and his acquaintance vied with each other in paying him reſpect. His life, he frequently repeated, had been a ſeries of unbroken ſucceſs. His religion, for he laid no ſtreſs on forms, was a ſentiment of grateful and fervent love. —"*God is love*," he would ſay, "and "the affectionate, benevolent heart is his "temple."

## CHAP. III.

IT will now be neceſſary, for the developement of my own particular character, again to revert to earlier periods.——A few days before my birth, my aunt had loſt (as already related) a lovely female infant, about four months old, and ſhe received me, from the hands of my dying mother, as a ſubſtitute.— From theſe tender and affecting circumſtances I was nurſed and attended with peculiar

peculiar care. My uncle's ſhip (it being war time) was then waiting for a convoy at Portſmouth, where he was joined by his wife: ſhe carried me with her, and, tenderly watchful over my ſafety, took me on all their little excurſions, whether by ſea or land: I hung at her breaſt, or reſted in her arms, and her huſband, or attendant, alternately relieved her.—— Plump, ſmiling, placid, happy, I never diſturbed her reſt, and the little Emma was the darling of her kind guardians, and the plaything of the company.

At the age at which it was thought neceſſary to wean me, I was ſent from my tender nurſe for that purpoſe, and conſigned to the care of a ſtranger, with whom I quickly pined myſelf into a jaundice and bilious fever. My aunt dared not viſit me during this ſhort ſeparation, ſhe was unable to bear my piercing cries of anguiſh at her departure. If a momentary ſenſation, at that infantine period, deſerve the appellation, I might call this my firſt affectionate ſorrow. I have frequently thought that the tender-

neſs

neſs of this worthy woman generated in my infant diſpoſition that ſuſceptibility, that lively propenſity to attachment, to which I have through life been a martyr. On my return to my friends, I quickly regained my health and ſpirits; was active, blythſome, ran, bounded, ſported, romped; always light, gay, alert, and full of glee. At church, (whither on Sunday I was accuſtomed to accompany the family) I offended all the pious ladies in our vicinity by my gameſome tricks, and avoided the reprimands of my indulgent guardians by the drollery and good humour which accompanied them.

When myſelf and my little couſins had wearied ourſelves with play, their mother, to keep us quiet in an evening, while her huſband wrote letters in an adjoining apartment, was accuſtomed to relate (for our entertainment) ſtories from the Arabian Nights, Turkiſh Tales, and other works of like marvellous import. She recited them circumſtantially, and theſe I liſtened to with ever new delight: the more they excited vivid emotions, the more won-

wonderful they were, the greater was my tranſport: they became my favourite amuſement, and produced, in my young mind, a ſtrong deſire of learning to read the books which contained ſuch enchanting ſtores of entertainment.

Thus ſtimulated, I learned to read quickly, and with facility. My uncle took pleaſure in aſſiſting me; and, with parental partiality, thought he diſcovered, in the ardour and promptitude with which I received his inſtructions, the dawn of future talents. At ſix years old I read aloud before company, with great applauſe, my uncle's favourite authors, Pope's Homer, and Thomſon's Seaſons, little comprehending either. Emulation was rouſed, and vanity foſtered: I learned to recite verſes, to modulate my tones of voice, and began to think myſelf a wonderful ſcholar.

Thus, in peace and gaiety, glided the days of my childhood. Careſſed by my aunt, flattered by her huſband, I grew vain and ſelf-willed; my deſires were impetuous, and brooked no delay; my affections

fections were warm, and my temper iraſcible; but it was the glow of a moment, inſtantly ſubſiding on conviction, and, when conſcious of having committed injuſtice, I was ever eager to repair it, by a profuſion of careſſes and acknowledgements. Oppoſition would always make me vehement, and coercion irritated me to violence; but a kind look, a gentle word, a cool expoſtulation—ſoftened, melted, arreſted, me, in the full career of paſſion. Never, but once, do I recollect having received a blow; but the boiling rage, the cruel tempeſt, the deadly vengeance it excited, in my mind, I now remember with ſhuddering.

Every day I became more attached to my books; yet, not leſs fond of active play; ſtories were ſtill my paſſion, and I ſighed for a romance that would never end. In my ſports with my companions, I acted over what I had read: I was alternately the valiant knight—the gentle damſel—the adventurous mariner—the daring robber—the courteous lover—and the airy coquet. Ever inventive, my young

young friends took their tone from me. I hated the needle:—my aunt was indulgent, and not an hour paſſed unamuſed:—my reſources were various, fantaſtic, and endleſs. Thus, for the firſt twelve years of my life, fleeted my days in joy and innocence. I ran like the hind, friſked like the kid, ſang like the lark, was full of vivacity, health, and animation; and, excepting ſome momentary burſts of paſſion and impatience, awoke every day to new enjoyment, and retired to reſt fatigued with pleaſure.

## CHAP. IV.

AT this period, by the command of my father, I was ſent to boarding ſchool.—Ah! never ſhall I forget the contraſt I experienced. I was an alien and a ſtranger;—no one loved, careſſed, nor cared for me;—my actions were all con-

conſtrained;—I was obliged to ſit poring over needle work, and forbidden to prate;—my body was tortured into forms, my mind coerced, and taſks impoſed upon me, grammar and French, mere words, that conveyed to me no ideas. I loved my guardians with paſſion—my taſtes were all paſſions—they tore themſelves from my embraces with difficulty. I ſat down, after their departure, and wept—bitter tears—ſobbed convulſively—my griefs were unheeded, and my ſenſibility ridiculed—I neither gave nor received pleaſure. After the rude ſtare of curioſity, ever wounding to my feelings, was gratified, I was left to ſob alone.

At length, one young lady, with a fair face and a gentle demeanour, came and ſeated herſelf beſide me. She ſpoke, in a ſoft voice, words of ſympathy——my deſolate heart fluttered at the ſound. I looked at her——her features were mild and ſweet; I dried my tears, and determined that ſhe ſhould be my friend.—My ſpirits became calmer, and for a ſhort time I indulged in this relief; but, on

enquiry,

enquiry, I found my fair companion had already a ſelected favourite, and that their amity was the admiration of the ſchool. —Proud, jealous, romantic—I could not ſubmit to be the ſecond in her eſteem—I ſhunned her, and returned her careſſes with coldneſs.

The only mitigation I now felt to the anguiſh that had ſeized my ſpirits, was in the hours of buſineſs. I was ſoon diſtinguiſhed for attention and capacity; but my governeſs being with-held, by an infirm conſtitution, from the duties of her office, I was conſigned, with my companions, to ignorant, ſplenetic, teachers, who encouraged not my emulation, and who ſported with the acuteneſs of my ſenſations. In the intervals from ſchool hours I ſought and procured books.—Theſe were often wantonly taken from me, as a puniſhment for the moſt trivial offence; and, when my indignant ſpirit broke out into murmurs and remonſtrance, I was conſtrained to learn, by way of penance, chapters in the Proverbs of Solomon, or verſes from the French

French teſtament. To revenge myſelf, I ſatirized my tyrants in doggrel rhymes: my writing maſter alſo came in for a ſhare of this little malice; and my productions, wretched enough, were handed round the ſchool with infinite applauſe. Sunk in ſullen melancholy, in the hours of play I crept into corners, and diſdained to be amuſed:—home appeared to me to be the Eden from which I was driven, and there my heart and thoughts inceſſantly recurred.

My uncle from time to time addreſſed to me—with little preſents—kind, pleaſant, affectionate notes—and theſe I treaſured up as ſacred relics. A viſit of my guardians was a yet more tumultuous pleaſure; but it always left me in increaſed anguiſh. Some robberies had been committed on the road to town.—After parting with my friends, I have laid awake the whole night, conjuring up in my imagination all the tragic accidents I had ever heard or read of, and perſuading myſelf ſome of them muſt have happened

pened to theſe darling objects of my affections.

Thus paſſed the firſt twelvemonth of my exile from all I loved; during which time it was reported, by my ſchool-fellows, that I had never been ſeen to ſmile. After the vacations, I was carried back to my priſon with agonizing reluctance, to which in the ſecond year I became, however, from habit, better reconciled. I learned muſic, was praiſed and encouraged by my maſter, and grew fond of it; I contracted friendſhips, and regained my vivacity; from a forlorn, unſocial, being, I became, once more, lively, active, enterpriſing,—the ſoul of all amuſement, and the leader of every innocently miſchievous frolic. At the cloſe of another year I left ſchool. I kept up a correſpondence for ſome time with a few of my young friends, and my effuſions were improved and poliſhed by my paternal uncle.

CHAP.

## CHAP. V.

THIS period, which I had anticipated with rapture, was ſoon clouded by the gradual decay, and premature death, of my revered and excellent guardian. He ſuſtained a painful and tedious ſickneſs with unſhaken fortitude;—with more, with chearfulneſs. I knelt by his bedſide on the day of his deceaſe; and, while I bathed his hand with my tears, caught hope from the ſweet, the placid, ſerenity of his countenance, and could not believe the terrors of diſſolution near.

"The laſt ſentiment of my heart," ſaid he, "is gratitude to the Being who has "given me ſo large a portion of good; "and I reſign my family into his hands "with confidence."

He awoke from a ſhort ſlumber a few minutes before his death.——"Emma," ſaid he, in a faint voice, (as I graſped his cold hand between both mine) turning upon me a mild, yet dying, eye, "I have

"had

"had a pleaſant ſleep——Be a good girl, "and comfort your aunt!"—

He expired without a groan, or a ſtruggle——"His death was the ſerene "evening of a beautiful day!" I gazed on his lifeleſs remains, the day before their interment, and the features ſtill wore the ſame placid, ſmiling benignity. I was then about fourteen years of age,—this firſt emotion of real ſorrow rent my heart aſunder!

The ſenſations of Mrs. Melmoth were thoſe of agonizing, ſuffocating anguiſh:——the fair proſpect of domeſtic felicity was veiled for ever! This was the ſecond ſtrong impreſſion which ſtruck my opening mind. Many loſſes occurred, in conſequence of foreign connections, in the ſettlement of Mr. Melmoth's affairs.—The family found their fortunes ſcanty, and their expectations limited:—their numerous fair-profeſſing acquaintance gradually deſerted them, and they ſunk into œconomical retirement; but they continued to be reſpectable, becauſe they knew

how to contract their wants, and to preſerve their independence.

My aunt, oppreſſed with ſorrow, could be rouſed only by ſettling the neceſſary plans for the future proviſion of her family. Occupied with theſe concerns, or abſorbed in grief, we were left for ſome time to run wild. Months revolved ere the tender ſorrows of Mrs. Melmoth admitted of any mitigation: they at length yielded only to tender melancholy. My wonted amuſements were no more; a deep gloom was ſpread over our once cheerful reſidence; my avidity for books daily increaſed: I ſubſcribed to a circulating library, and frequently read, or rather devoured—little careful in the ſelection—from ten to fourteen novels in a week.

## CHAP. VI.

MY father ſatisfied himſelf, after the death of my beloved uncle, with making

making a ſhort and formal viſit of condolence to the family, and propoſing either my return to ſchool, or to pay an annual ſtipend (which Mr. and Mrs. Melmoth had hitherto invariably refuſed) for defraying the expences of my continuance and board with the amiable family by which I had been ſo kindly nurtured. I ſhrunk from the cold and careleſs air of a man whom I had never been able to teach my heart either to love or honour; and, throwing my arms round the neck of my maternal aunt, murmured a ſupplication, mingled with convulſive ſobs, that ſhe would not deſert me. She returned my careſſes affectionately, and entreated my father to permit me to remain with her; adding, that it was her determination to endeavour to rouſe and ſtrengthen her mind, for the performance of thoſe preſſing duties—the education of her beloved children, among whom ſhe had ever accounted her Emma—which now devolved wholly upon her.

My father made no objection to this requeſt; but obſerved, that notwithſtanding he had a very favourable opinion of her heart and underſtanding, and conſidered himſelf indebted to her, and to her deceaſed huſband, for their goodneſs to Emma, he was nevertheleſs apprehenſive that the girl had been weakened and ſpoiled by their indulgence;—that his own health was at preſent conſiderably injured;—that it was probable he might not ſurvive many years;—in which caſe, he frankly confeſſed, he had enjoyed life too freely to be able to make much proviſion for his daughter. It would therefore, he conceived, be more judicious to prepare and ſtrengthen my mind to encounter, with fortitude, ſome hardſhips and rude ſhocks, to which I might be expoſed, than to foſter a ſenſibility, which he already perceived, with regret, was but too acute. For which purpoſe, he deſired I might ſpend one day in every week at his houſe in Berkley-ſquare, when he ſhould put ſuch books into my hands [he had been informed I had a tolerable

lerable capacity] as he judged would be uſeful to me; and, in the intervals of his various occupations and amuſements, aſſiſt me himſelf with occaſional remarks and reflections. Any little accompliſhments which Mrs. Melmoth might judge neceſſary for, and ſuitable to, a young woman with a ſmall fortune, and which required the aſſiſtance of a maſter, he would be obliged to her if ſhe would procure for me, and call upon him to defray the additional expence.

He then, looking on his watch, and declaring he had already miſſed an appointment, took his leave, after naming Monday as the day on which he ſhould conſtantly expect my attendance in Berkley-ſquare.

Till he left the room I had not courage to raiſe my eyes from the ground —my feelings were harrowed up—the tone of his voice was diſcordant to my ears. The only idea that alleviated the horror of my weekly puniſhment (for ſo I conſidered the viſits to Berkley-ſquare) was the hope of reading new books, and

of being ſuffered to range uncontrouled through an extenſive and valuable library, for ſuch I had been aſſured was Mr. Courtney's. I ſtill retained my paſſion for adventurous tales, which, even while at ſchool, I was enabled to gratify by means of one of the day-boarders, who procured for me romances from a neighbouring library, which at every interval of leiſure I peruſed with inconceivable avidity.

## CHAP. VII.

THE following Monday I prepared to attend Mr. Courtney. On arriving at his houſe, and announcing my name, a ſervant conducted me into his maſter's dreſſing-room. I appeared before him with trembling ſteps, downcaſt eyes, and an averted face.

"Look

"Look up, child!" ſaid my father, in an imperious tone. "If you are con-"ſcious of no crime, why all this ridicu-"lous confuſion?"

I ſtruggled with my feelings: the tone and manner in which I was addreſſed gave me an indignant ſenſation:—a deeper ſuffuſion than that of modeſty, the glow of wounded pride, burnt in my cheeks:—I turned quick, gazed in the face of Mr. Courtney with a ſteady eye, and ſpoke a few words, in a firm voice, importing—that I attended by his deſire, and waited his direction.

He regarded me with ſomewhat leſs *hauteur*; and, while he finiſhed dreſſing, interrogated me reſpecting the books I had read, and the impreſſion they had left on my mind. I replied with ſimplicity, and without evaſion. He ſoon diſcovered that my imagination had been left to wander unreſtrained in the fairy fields of fiction; but that, of hiſtorical facts, and the ſcience of the world, I was entirely ignorant.

"It is as I apprehended," ſaid he:— "your fancy requires a *rein* rather than "a *ſpur*. Your ſtudies, for the future, "muſt be of a ſoberer nature, or I ſhall "have you miſtake my valet for a "prince in diſguiſe, my houſe for a "haunted caſtle, and my rational care "for your future welfare for barbarous "tyranny."

I felt a poignant and ſuffocating ſenſation, too complicated to bear analyzing, and followed Mr. Courtney in ſilence to the library. My heart bounded when, on entering a ſpacious room, I perceived on either ſide a large and elegant aſſortment of books, regularly arranged in glaſs caſes, and I longed to be left alone, to expatiate freely in theſe treaſures of entertainment. But I ſoon diſcovered, to my inexpreſſible mortification, that the caſes were locked, and that in this intellectual feaſt I was not to be my own purveyor. My father, after putting into my hands the lives of Plutarch, left me to my meditations; informing me, that he ſhould probably dine at home with a few friends,

at

at five o'clock, when he ſhould expect my attendance at the table.

I opened my book languidly, after having examined through the glaſs doors the titles of thoſe which were with-held from me. I felt a kind of diſguſt to what I conſidered as a taſk impoſed, and read a few pages careleſsly, gazing at intervals through the windows into the ſquare.—But my attention, as I proceeded, was ſoon forcibly arreſted, my curioſity excited, and my enthuſiaſm awakened. The hours paſſed rapidly—I perceived not their flight—and at five o'clock, when ſummoned to dinner, I went down into the dining-room, my mind pervaded with republican ardour, my ſentiments elevated by a high-toned philoſophy, and my boſom glowing with the virtues of patriotiſm.

I found with Mr. Courtney company of both ſexes, to whom he preſented me on my entrance. Their eaſy compliments diſconcerted me, and I ſhrunk, abaſhed, from the bold and curious eyes of the gentlemen. During the repaſt I ate little,

but liſtened in ſilence to every thing that paſſed.

The theatres were the firſt topic of converſation, Venice Preſerved had been acted the preceding evening, and from diſcuſſing the play, the converſation took a political turn. A gentleman that happened to be ſeated next me, who ſpoke fluently, looking around him every moment for approbation, with apparent ſelf-applauſe, gave the diſcourſe a tone of gallantry, declaring—"Pierre to be a "noble fellow, and that the loſs of a "miſtreſs was a ſufficient excuſe for "treaſon and conſpiracy, even though "the country had been deluged in blood "and involved in conflagration."

"And the miſtreſſes of all his fellow "citizens deſtroyed of courſe;"—ſaid a gentleman coolly, on the oppoſite ſide of the table.

Oh! that was not a conſideration, every thing muſt give place when put in competition with certain feelings. "What, "young lady, (ſuddenly turning to me) "do

" do you think a lover would not riſque,
" who was in fear of loſing you ?"

Good God! what a queſtion to an admirer of the grecian heroes! I ſtarted, and abſolutely ſhuddered. I would have replied, but my words died away upon my lips in inarticulate murmurs. My father obſerved and enjoyed my diſtreſs.

" The worthies of whom you have been
" reading, Emma, lived in ancient times:
" Ariſtides the juſt, would have made
" but a poor figure among our modern
" men of faſhion !"

" This lady reads, then"—ſaid our accompliſhed coxcomb — " Heavens,
" Mr. Courtney ! you will ſpoil all her-
" feminine graces; knowledge and
" learning, are inſufferably maſculine
" in a woman—born only for the
" ſoft ſolace of man! The mind of a
" young lady ſhould be clear and un-
" ſullied, like a ſheet of white paper,
" or her own fairer face: lines of think-
" ing deſtroy the dimples of beauty;
" aping the reaſon of man, they loſe the
" exquiſite, *faſcinating* charm, in which

" conſiſts their true empire;—Then
" ſtrongeſt, when moſt weak—"

" Lovelieſt in their fears—
" And by this ſilent adulation, ſoft,
" To their protection more engaging man."

" Pſhaw!" replied Mr. Courtney, a little peeviſhly—" you will perſuade " Emma, that the age of chivalry is not " yet over; and that giants and raviſhers " are as common now, as in the time of " Charlemagne: a young woman of ſenſe " and ſpirit needs no other protection; do " not flatter the girl into affectation and " imbecility. If blank paper be your paſ- " ſion, you can be at no loſs; the town will " ſupply quires and reams."

" There I differ from you," ſaid the gentleman on the oppoſite ſide of the table; " to preſerve the mind a blank, " we muſt be both deaf and blind, for, " while any inlet to perception remains, " your paper will infallibly contract " characters of ſome kind, or be blotted " and ſcrawled!"

" For

"For God's ſake! do not let us begin "to philoſophiſe," retorted his antagoniſt, who was not to be eaſily ſilenced.

"I agree with you"—rejoined the other—"*thinking* is undoubtedly very "laborious, and *principle* equally trouble-"ſome and impertinent."

I looked at him as he finiſhed ſpeaking, and caught his eye for a moment; its expreſſion methought was doubtful. The man of faſhion continued to expatiate in rhetorical periods—He informed us, that he had fine feelings, but they never extended beyond ſelfiſh gratification. For his part, he had as much humanity as any man, for which reaſon he carefully avoided the ſcene or the tale of diſtreſs. He, likewiſe, had his opinions, but their pliability rendered them convenient to himſelf, and accommodating to his friends. He had courage to ſuſtain fatigue and hardſhip, when, not his country, but vanity demanded the exertion. It was glorious to boaſt of having travelled two hundred miles in eight and forty hours, and ſat up three nights,

to be preſent, on two ſucceeding evenings, at a ball in diſtant counties.

"This man," ſaid I to myſelf, while I regarded him with a look of ineffable ſcorn—"takes a great deal of pains to "render himſelf ridiculous, he ſurely muſt "have a vile heart, or a contemptible "opinion of mankind: if he be really "the character he deſcribes, he is a com-"pound of atrocity and folly, and a "peſt to the world: if he ſlanders him-"ſelf, what muſt be that ſtate of ſociety, "the applauſe of which he perſuades "himſelf is to be thus acquired?" I ſighed deeply;—in either caſe the reflection was melancholy;—my eyes enquired—"Am I to hate or to deſpiſe "you?" I know not whether he underſtood their language, but he troubled me no more with his attentions.

I reflected a little too ſeriouſly:—I have ſince ſeen many a prating, ſuperficial coxcomb, who talks to diſplay his oratory—*mere words*—repeated by rote, to which few ideas are affixed, and which are uttered and received with equal apathy.

CHAP.

## CHAP. VIII.

DURING three years, I continued my weekly viſits to Berkley ſquare; I was not always allowed to join the parties who aſſembled there, neither indeed would it have been proper, for they were a motley groupe; when permitted ſo to do, I collected materials for reflection. I had been educated by my good aunt, in ſtrict principles of religion; many of Mr. Courtney's friends were men of wit and talents, who, occaſionally, diſcuſſed important ſubjects with freedom and ability: I never ventured to mingle in the converſations, but I overcame my timidity ſufficiently to behave with propriety and compoſure; I liſtened attentively to all that was ſaid, and my curioſity was awakened to philoſophic enquiries.

Mr. Courtney now entruſted me with the keys of the bookcaſes, through which I ranged with ever new delight. I went through,

through, by my father's direction, a courſe of hiſtorical reading, but I could never acquire a taſte for this ſpecies of compoſition. Accounts of the early periods of ſtates and empires, of the Grecian and Roman republics, I purſued with pleaſure and enthuſiaſm: but when they became more complicated, grew corrupt, luxurious, licentious, perfidious, mercenary, I turned from them fatigued, and diſguſted, and ſought to recreate my ſpirits in the fairer regions of poetry and fiction.

My early aſſociations rendered theology an intereſting ſubject to me; I read eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, a detail of errors and crimes, and entered deeply into polemic divinity: my mind began to be emancipated, doubts had been ſuggeſted to it, I reaſoned freely, endeavoured to arrange and methodize my opinions, and to trace them fearleſsly through all their conſequences: while from exerciſing my thoughts with freedom, I ſeemed to acquire new ſtrength and dignity of character. I met with ſome of the writings of Deſcartes, and was ſeized with a paſſion for metaphyſical

enquiries,

enquiries. I began to think about the nature of the ſoul—whether it was a compoſition of the elements, the reſult of organized matter, or a ſubtle and etherial fire.

In the courſe of my reſearches, the Heloiſe of Rouſſeau fell into my hands.—Ah! with what tranſport, with what enthuſiaſm, did I peruſe this dangerous, enchanting, work!—How ſhall I paint the ſenſations that were excited in my mind! —the pleaſure I experienced approached the limits of pain—it was tumult—all the ardour of my character was excited.—Mr. Courtney, one day, ſurpriſed me weeping over the ſorrows of the tender St. Preux. He haſtily ſnatched the book from my hand, and, carefully collecting the remaining volumes, carried them in ſilence to his chamber: but the impreſſion made on my mind was never to be effaced —it was even productive of a long chain of conſequences, that will continue to operate till the day of my death.

My time at this period paſſed rapidly and pleaſantly. My father never treated

me

me with affection; but the auſterity of his manner gradually ſubſided. He gave me, occaſionally, uſeful hints and inſtructions. Without feeling for him any tenderneſs, he inſpired me with a degree of reſpect. The library was a ſource of lively and inexhauſtible pleaſure to my mind; and, when admitted to the table of Mr. Courtney, ſome new character or ſentiment frequently ſharpened my attention, and afforded me ſubjects for future enquiry and meditation. I delighted to expatiate, when returning to the kind and hoſpitable manſion of my beloved aunt, (which I ſtill conſidered as my home) on the various topics which I had collected in my little emigrations. I was liſtened to by my couſins with a pleaſure that flattered my vanity, and looked up to as a kind of ſuperior being;—a homage particularly gratifying to a young mind.

## CHAP. IX.

THE excellent woman, who had been my more than mother, took infinite pains to cure the foibles, which, like pernicious weeds, entangled themſelves with, and ſometimes threatened to choak, the embryo bloſſoms of my expanding mind. Ah! with what pleaſure do I recall her beloved idea to my memory! Foſtered by her maternal love, and guided by her mild reaſon, how placid, and how ſweet, were my early days! —Why, my firſt, my tendereſt friend, did I loſe you at that critical period of life, when the harmleſs ſports and occupations of childhood gave place to the purſuits, the paſſions, and the errors of youth?—With the eloquence of affection, with gentle, yet impreſſive perſuaſion, thou mighteſt have checked the wild career of energetic feeling, which thou haſt ſo often remarked with hope and terror.

As I entered my eighteenth year, I loſt, by a premature death, this tender moni-

tor.

tor. Never ſhall I forget her laſt emphatic, affectionate, caution.

"Beware, my dear Emma," ſaid this revered friend, "beware of ſtrengthening, "by indulgence, thoſe ardent and impetu- "ous ſenſations, which, while they pro- "miſe vigour of mind, fill me with ap- "prehenſion for the virtue, for the hap- "pineſs of my child. I wiſh not that "the canker-worm, Diſtruſt, ſhould blaſt "the fair fruit of your ripening virtues. "The world contains many benevolent, "many diſintereſted, ſpirits; but civiliza- "tion is yet diſtempered and imperfect; "the inequalities of ſociety, by foſtering "artificial wants, and provoking jealous "competitions, have generated ſelfiſh "and hoſtile paſſions. Nature has been "vainly provident for her offspring, "while man, with miſtaken avidity, "graſping more than he has powers to "enjoy, preys on his fellow man:—de- "parting from ſimple virtues, and ſim- "ple pleaſures, in their ſtead, by common "conſent, has a wretched ſemblance been "ſubſtituted. Endeavour to contract

"your

" your wants, and aſpire only to a ra-
" tional independence; by exerciſing your
" faculties, ſtill the importunate ſuggeſ-
" tions of your ſenſibility; preſerve your
" ſincerity, cheriſh the ingenuous warmth
" of unſophiſticated feeling, but let diſ-
" cernment precede confidence. I trem-
" ble even for the exceſs of thoſe virtues
" which I have laboured to cultivate in
" your lively and docile mind. If I
" could form a wiſh for longer life, it is
" only for my children, and that I might
" be to my Emma inſtead of reaſon, till
" her own ſtronger mind matures. I
" dread, leſt the illuſions of imagination
" ſhould render thoſe powers, which
" would give force to truth and virtue,
" the auxiliaries of paſſion. Learn to
" diſtinguiſh, with accuracy, the good
" and ill qualities of thoſe with whom
" you may mingle: while you abhor
" the latter, ſeparate the being from his
" errors; and while you revere the for-
" mer, the moment that your reverence
" becomes perſonal, that moment, ſuſpect

" that

"that your judgment is in danger of be-
"coming the dupe of your affections."

Would to God that I had impreſſed upon my mind—that I had recalled to my remembrance more frequently—a leſſon ſo important to a diſpoſition like mine! —a continual victim to the enthuſiaſm of my feelings; incapable of approving, or diſapproving, with moderation—the moſt poignant ſufferings, even the ſtudy of mankind, have been inſufficient to diſſolve the powerful enchantment, to diſentangle the cloſe-twiſted aſſociations!——But I check this train of overwhelming reflection, that is every moment on the point of breaking the thread of my narration, and obtruding itſelf to my pen.

## CHAP. X.

MR. Courtney did not long ſurvive the guardian of my infancy:—his conſtitution had for ſome years been gradually

dually impaired; and his death was haſtened by a continuance of habitual diſſipation, which he had not the reſolution to relinquiſh, and to which his ſtrength was no longer equal. It was an event I had long anticipated, and which I contemplated with a ſenſation of ſolemnity, rather than of grief. The ties of blood are weak, if not the mere chimeras of prejudice, unleſs ſanctioned by reaſon, or cemented by habits of familiar and affectionate intercourſe. Mr. Courtney refuſing the title of father, from a conviction that his conduct gave him no claim to this endearing appellation, had accuſtomed me to feel for him only the reſpect due to ſome talents and good qualities, which threw a veil over his faults. Courage and truth were the principles with which he endeavoured to inſpire me;—precepts, which I gratefully acknowledge, and which forbid me to adopt the language of affection, when no reſponſive ſympathies exiſt in the heart.

My eyes were yet moiſt with the tears that I had ſhed for the loſs of my maternal friend,

friend, when I received a haſty ſummons to Berkley-ſquare. A ſervant informed me, that his maſter was, at length, given over by his phyſicians, and wiſhed to ſpeak to Miſs Courtney, before his ſtrength and ſpirits were too much exhauſted.

I neither felt, nor affected, ſurprize at this intelligence, but threw myſelf, without reply, into the carriage which had been diſpatched for my conveyance.

On entering the houſe, a gloomy ſilence ſeemed to reign throughout the late feſtive apartments; but, as I had ſeldom been a partaker of the feſtivity, the contraſt ſtruck me leſs forcibly than it might otherwiſe have done. My name was announced, and I was conducted, by the houſekeeper, to the chamber of her dying maſter, who, ſupported on pillows, breathed with difficulty, but appeared to be free from pain, and tolerably compoſed. I met the phyſician in the antechamber; who, on my requeſting earneſtly to know the ſituation of his patient, informed me—That an internal mortification

cation had taken place, and that he could not ſurvive many hours.

Approaching the bed, conſiderably ſhocked at the intelligence I had received, Mr. Courtney, in a low and faint voice, deſired me to draw a chair near him. I obeyed in ſilence.

"Emma," ſaid he, "I am about to "quit a world, in which I have experi- "enced little ſincere enjoyment; yet, I "leave it reluctantly. Had I been more "temperate in my pleaſures, perhaps, "they might have been leſs deſtructive, "and more protracted. I begin to ſuſ- "pect, that I have made ſome great miſ- "takes; but it is now too late for retrac- "tion, and I will not, in my laſt mo- "ments, contradict, by my example, the "leſſon of fortitude, with which it has "been a part of my plan to inſpire you. "You have now, unprotected, the world "to encounter; for, I will frankly con- "feſs, that my affection for you has not "been ſtrong enough to induce me to "forego my own more immediate grati- "fication: but I have never deceived

" you. Your mother, when ſhe married,
" reſerved for her private expences a
" thouſand pounds, which, on her death-
" bed, ſhe deſired might be inveſted in
" the funds on your account. This re-
" queſt I religiouſly complied with, and
" there it has remained untouched; and,
" being purchaſed in your name, you
" may claim it whenever you pleaſe. I
" have appointed you no guardians;
" for, already in your nineteenth year, and
" poſſeſſing an underſtanding ſuperior to
" your ſex and age, I choſe to leave you
" unfettered, and at your own diſcretion.
" I ſpared from my pleaſures what money
" was requiſite to complete your educa-
" tion; for having no fortune to give
" you, and my health being precarious,
" I thought it juſt to afford you every
" advantage for the improvement of thoſe
" talents which you evidently poſſeſs,
" and which muſt now enable you to
" make your way in the world; for the
" ſcanty pittance, that the intereſt of your
" fortune will produce, is, I doubt, inſuf-
" ficient for your ſupport. Had I lived,

" it

" it was my intention to have eſtabliſhed
" you by marriage; but that is a ſcheme,
" to which, at preſent, I would not adviſe
" you to truſt. Marriage, generally
" ſpeaking, in the exiſting ſtate of things,
" muſt of neceſſity be an affair of *finance*.
" My intereſt and introduction might
" have availed you ſomething; but mere
" merit, wit, or beauty, ſtand in need
" of more powerful auxiliaries. My bro-
" ther, Mr. Morton,* called on me this
" morning:—he has agreed, for the pre-
" ſent, to receive you into his family,
" where you muſt endeavour to make
" yourſelf uſeful and agreeable, till you
" can fix on a better and more independ-
" ent plan. Finding me in ſo low a ſtate,
" your uncle would have waited a few
" days in town, to have ſeen the reſult,
" and, in caſe of the worſt, to have taken
" you down with him, but preſſing buſi-
" neſs urged his departure. I would ad-
" viſe you, immediately after my deceaſe,

* Mr. Courtney's brother had taken the name of Morton, to qualify himſelf for the inheritance of an eſtate, bequeathed to him by a diſtant relation.

"to ſet out for Morton Park. Proper "perſons are appointed to ſettle my "affairs:—when every thing is turned "into money, there will, I truſt, be ſuffi- "cient to diſcharge my juſt debts; but "do not flatter yourſelf with the expecta- "tion of a ſurplus. Your preſence here, "when I am no more, will be equally "unneceſſary and improper."

This was ſaid at intervals, and with difficulty; when, ſeeming quite exhauſted, he waved his hand for me to leave the room, and ſunk into a ſort of doſe, or rather ſtupor, which continued till within ſome minutes of his deceaſe.

Mr. Courtney had been, what is called, a man of pleaſure:—he had paſſed thro' life without ever loving any one but himſelf—intent, merely, on gratifying the humour of the moment. A ſuperior education, and an attentive obſervance, not of rational, but, of ſocial man, in an extenſive commerce with the world, had ſharpened his ſagacity; but he was inacceſſible to thoſe kindlings of the affections—thoſe glowings of admiration—inſpired by real,

or

or fancied, excellence, which never fail to expand and advance the minds of ſuch as are capable of ſketching, with a daring hand, the dangerous picture:—or of thoſe philoſophic and comprehenſive views, which teach us to ſeek a reflected happineſs in benevolent exertions for the welfare of others. My mother, I ſuſpected, had been the victim of her huſband's unkindneſs and neglect: wonder not, then, that my heart revolted when I would have given him the tender appellation of father! If he coldly acknowledged any little merits which I poſſeſſed, he regarded them rather with jealouſy than approbation; for he felt that they tacitly reproached him.

I will make no comment on the cloſing ſcene of his life. Among the various emotions which had rapidly ſucceeded each other in my mind, during his laſt addreſs, ſurprize had no place; I had not then his character to learn.

## CHAP. XI.

THE ſmall pittance bequeathed to me was inſufficient to preſerve me from dependence.—*Dependence!*—I repeated to myſelf, and I felt my heart die within me. I revolved in my mind various plans for my future eſtabliſhment. —I might, perhaps, be allowed to officiate, as an aſſiſtant, in the ſchool where I had been placed in my childhood, with the miſtreſs of which I ſtill kept up an occaſional correſpondence; but this was a ſpecies of ſervitude, and my mind panted for freedom, for ſocial intercourſe, for ſcenes in motion, where the active curioſity of my temper might find a ſcope wherein to range and ſpeculate. What could the intereſt of my little fortune afford? It would neither enable me to live alone, nor even to board in a family of any reſpectability. My beloved aunt was no more; her children were about to be

be diſperſed, and to form various connections.

Cruel prejudices!—I exclaimed—hapleſs woman! Why was I not educated for commerce, for a profeſſion, for labour? Why have I been rendered feeble and delicate by bodily conſtraint, and faſtidious by artificial refinement? Why are we bound, by the habits of ſociety, as with an adamantine chain? Why do we ſuffer ourſelves to be confined within a magic circle, without daring, by a magnanimous effort, to diſſolve the barbarous ſpell?

A child in the drama of the world, I knew not which way to turn, nor on what to determine. I wrote to Mr. Morton, to enquire on what terms I was to be received by his family. If merely as a viſitor for a few weeks, till I had time to digeſt my plans, I ſhould meet, with pleaſure, a gentleman whoſe character I had been taught to reſpect; but I ſhould not conſider myſelf as ſubject to controul. I ought, perhaps, to have

been ſatisfied with Mr. Morton's anſwer to my interrogatories.

He wiſhed to embrace the daughter of his brother, his family would be happy to render Morton park agreeable to her, as long as ſhe ſhould think proper to favour them by making it her reſidence. The young ladies expected both pleaſure and improvement from the ſociety of their accompliſhed kinſwoman, &c.

I believe I was unreaſonable, the ſtyle of this letter was civil, nay kind, and yet it appeared, to me, to want the vivifying principle—what ſhall I ſay?—dictated merely by the head, it reached not the heart.

The trials of my mind, I foreboded, were about to commence, I ſhrunk from the world I had been ſo willing to enter, for the rude ſtorms of which I had been little fitted by the foſtering tenderneſs of my early guardians. Thoſe ardent feelings and lively expectations, with all the glowing landſcapes which my mind had ſketched of the varied pleaſures of ſociety, while in a meaſure ſecluded from its enjoyments, gradually melted into one deep,

undiſtinguiſhed

undiſtinguiſhed ſhade. That ſanguine ardour of temper, which had hitherto appeared the predominant feature of my character, now gave place to deſpondency. I wept, I ſuffered my tears to flow unreſtrained: the ſolemnity of the late events had ſeized my ſpirits, and the approaching change filled me with ſolicitude. I wandered over the ſcenes of my paſt pleaſures, and recalled to my remembrance, with a ſad and tender luxury, a thouſand little incidents, that derived all their importance from the impoſſibility of their renewal. I gazed on every object, *for the laſt time*—What is there in theſe words that awakens our fanaticiſm? I could have done homage to theſe inanimate, and, till now, unintereſting objects; merely becauſe I ſhould *ſee them no more.*

How fantaſtic and how capricious are theſe ſentiments! Ought I, or ought I not, to bluſh while I acknowledge them? My young friends, alſo, from whom I was about to ſeparate myſelf!—how various might be our deſtinies, and how unconſcious were we of the future! Happy ig-

norance, that by bringing the evils of life in ſucceſſion, gradually inures us to their endurance.

" Had I beheld the ſum of ills, which one
" By one, I have endured—my heart had broke.

## CHAP. XII.

THE hour at length came, when, harraſſed in body and in mind, I ſet out for Morton park. I travelled alone, and reached the end of my journey at the cloſe of day. I entreated Mr. Morton, who haſtened to hand me from the carriage, and welcome my arrival, that I might be permitted to retire to my apartment, pleading fatigue, and wiſhing to wave the ceremony of an introduction to the family till the next morning. My requeſt was obligingly granted, and a ſervant ordered to attend me to my chamber.

Many

Many years had elapſed ſince I had ſeen this family, and my judgment was then ſo immature, that our meeting at the breakfaſt table had with each of us, I believe, the force of a firſt impreſſion. You know my *fanaticiſm* on theſe occaſions. I will attempt an imperfect ſketch of the groupe, aſſembled in the ſaloon, to whom I was ſeverally preſented on my entrance, by the lord of the domain. Mr. Morton, himſelf, to whom precedence is due, ſeemed to be about fifty years of age, was of the middle ſtature, his features regular, and his countenance placid: he ſpoke but little, but that little was always mild and often judicious. He appeared not to be void of benevolent affections, and had the character of a humane landlord, but his virtues were, in a great meaſure, ſunk in an habitual indolence of temper; he would ſometimes ſacrifice his principles to his repoſe, though never to his intereſt. His lady—no, I will not deſcribe her; her character will, it may be, unfold itſelf to you in future—Suffice it to ſay, that her perſon was groſs, her voice loud and diſcordant, and her

features rugged: ſhe affected an air of openneſs and pleaſantry; It may be prejudiced, perhaps ſhe did not *affect it*. Sarah Morton, the eldeſt of the daughters, was about my own age, ſhe was under the middle height, fair, plump, loquacious; there was a childiſh levity in her accent and manners, which impreſſed ſtrangers with an unfavourable opinion of her underſtanding, but it was an acquired manner, for ſhe was ſhrewd and ſenſible. Ann, the ſecond daughter, was a little lively brunette, with ſharp features and ſparkling black eyes; volatile, giddy, vain and thoughtleſs, but good humoured and pretty. The other children were much younger.

Two gentlemen joined us at our repaſt, viſitors at Morton park. Mr. Francis, the elder, was in his fortieth year, his figure ſlender and delicate, his eye piercing, and his manner impreſſive. It occurred to me, that I had ſomewhere ſeen him before, and, after a few minutes recollection, I recognized in him a gentleman who had occaſionally viſited at my father's,

father's, and whom I have already mentioned as the antagoniſt of the man of faſhion, whoſe ſentiments and volubility excited my youthful aſtoniſhment and indignation. Mr. Montague the younger, the ſon of a medical gentleman reſiding in a neighbouring county, ſeemed about one and twenty, tall, elegantly formed, full of fire and vivacity, with imperious manners, an impetuous temper, and ſtubborn prejudices.

The introduction of a ſtranger generally throws ſome kind of reſtraint over a company; a break is made in their uſual topics and aſſociations, till the diſpoſition and habits of the intruder have, in ſome degree, unfolded themſelves. Mrs Morton took upon herſelf to entertain; ſhe exhibited her talents on various ſubjects, with apparent ſelf-approbation, till a few keen remarks from Mr. Francis arreſted the torrent of her eloquence. The young ladies ſcrutinized me with attention; even the lively Ann, while ſhe minutely obſerved me, ceaſed to court play from Mr. Montague, who attended to me with

the

the air, and addreſſed me in the language of gallantry. I ſometimes caught the penetrating eye of Mr. Francis, and his glance ſeemed to ſearch the ſoul.

After breakfaſt, Mr. Morton having retired to his dreſſing-room, and the younger part of the company ſtrolling into the pleaſure grounds, whither I declined accompanying them, I took an opportunity, being ever deſirous of active and uſeful emyloyment, of offering my aſſiſtance to Mrs Morton, in the education of her younger children; propoſing to inſtruct them in the rudiments either of muſic, drawing, French, or any other accompliſhment, for which my own education had capacitated me. Mr. Francis remained ſtanding in a window, his back towards us, with a book in his hand, on which he ſeemed intent.

"If," replied Mrs. Morton, "it is "your wiſh, Miſs Courtney, to procure "the ſituation of governeſs in any gentle- "man's family, and it is certainly a very "laudable deſire in a young woman of "your *ſmall fortune*, Mr. Morton will, I "have

" have no doubt, have it in his power to " recommend you: but in the education " of my family, I deſire no interference; " it is an important taſk, and I have my " peculiar notions on the ſubject: their " expectations are not great, and your " *elegant* accompliſhments might unfit " them for their future, probable, ſta- " tions."

The manner in which this ſpeech was uttered ſpoke yet more forcibly than the words.—I felt my cheeks glow.

" I was not aſking favours, Madam, " I was only deſirous of being uſeful."

" It is a pity, then, that your diſcern- " ment had not corrected your vanity."

The houſekeeper entering, to conſult her miſtreſs on ſome domeſtic occaſion, Mrs. Morton quitted the room. Mr. Francis cloſed his book, turned round, and gazed earneſtly in my face: before ſufficiently mortified, his obſervation, which I felt at this moment oppreſſive, did not relieve me. I attempted to eſcape, but, ſeizing my hand, he detained me by a kind of gentle violence.

" And

"And why this confuſion, my dear "Miſs Courtney; do you bluſh for having "acted with propriety and ſpirit?" I burſt into tears—I could not help it—"How weak is this, how unworthy of the "good ſenſe you have juſt manifeſted."

"I confeſs it, but I feel myſelf, at this "moment, a poor, a friendleſs, an unpro-"tected being."

"What prejudices! poverty is neither "criminal, nor diſgraceful; you will not "want friends, while you continue to "deſerve them; and as for protection, "(and he ſmiled) I had not expected "from Emma Courtney's ſpirited letter "to Mr. Morton, and equally proper "retort to his lady's impertinence, ſo "plaintive, ſo feminine a complaint.—"You have talents, cultivate them, and "learn to reſt on your own powers."

"I thank you for your reproof, and ſo-"licit your future leſſons."

"Can you bear the truth?"

"Try me."

"Have you not cheriſhed a falſe "pride?"

It is too true, thought I, and I ſighed.

"How ſhall I cure this foible?"

"By ſelf-examination, by reſolution, "and perſeverance."

"Be to me inſtead of a conſcience."

"What, then, is become of your "own?"

"Prejudice, I doubt, has blinded and "warped it."

"I ſuſpect ſo; but you have energy and "candor, and are not, I hope, of a tem- "per to deſpond."

The return of the family terminated this ſingular converſation. The young ladies rallied me, on being found *tete-a-tete* with the philoſopher; Mr. Montague, I thought looked diſpleaſed. I ſtole out, while the party were dreſſing for dinner, and rambled into the gardens, which were extenſive, and laid out with taſte.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XIII.

I JUDGED my viſit here would not be very long. I ſcarcely knew whether I was moſt inclined to like or to fear Mr. Francis, but I determined, if poſſible, to cultivate his friendſhip. I interrogated myſelf again and again—From whence this reſtleſſneſs, this languor, this diſguſt, with all I hear and ſee?—Why do I feel wayward, querulous, faſtidious? Mr. Morton's family had no hearts; they appeared to want a *ſenſe*, that preyed inceſſantly on mine; I could not love them, and my heart panted to expand its ſenſations.

Sarah and Ann became jealous of me, and of each other; the haughty, yet ſuſceptible, Montague addreſſed each in turn, with a homage equally fervent for the moment, and equally tranſient. This young man was bold, ardent, romantic, and enterprizing, but blown about by every guſt of paſſion, he appeared each

each ſucceeding moment a different character: with a glowing and rapid imagination, he had never given himſelf time to reaſon, to compare, to acquire principles: following the bent of a raiſed, yet capricious fancy, he was ever in purſuit of meteors, that led him into miſchief, or phantoms, that diſſolved at his approach.

Had my mind been more aſſured and at eaſe, I could have amuſed myſelf with the whimſical flights of this eccentric being—One hour, attracted by the ſportive graces of Ann, he played with and careſſed her, while the minutes flew rapidly on the light wing of amuſement, and, till reminded by the grave countenance of Mr. Morton, ſeemed to forget that any other perſon was preſent. The next minute, diſguſted with her frivolity, all his attention was abſorbed by the leſs faſcinating, but more artful and ingenious, Sarah. Then, quitting them both, he would purſue my ſteps, break in upon my meditations, and haunt my retreats, from whence, when not diſpoſed to be entertained by his caprice, I found it not difficult

cult to drive him, by attacking ſome of his various prejudices:—accuſtomed to feel, and not to reaſon, his taſtes and opinions were vehement and uncontroulable.

From this ſociety, ſo uncongenial to my reflecting, reaſoning, mind, I found ſome reſource in the converſation of Mr. Francis. The pride of Montague was evidently piqued by the decided preference which I gave to the company of his friend; but his homage, or his reſentment, were alike indifferent to me: accuſtomed to ſpeak and act from my convictions, I was but little ſolicitous reſpecting the opinion of others. My underſtanding was exerciſed by attending to the obſervations of Mr. Francis, and by diſcuſſing the queſtions to which they led; yet it was exerciſed without being gratified: he oppoſed and bewildered me, convicted me of error, and harraſſed me with doubt.

Mr. Francis ſoon after prepared to return to town. I was affected at the idea of his departure; and felt, that in loſing his

his ſociety, I ſhould be deprived of my only rational recreation, and ſhould again be expoſed to Mrs. Morton's illiberal attacks, who appeared to have marked me out for her victim, though at preſent reſtrained by the preſence of a man, who had found means to inſpire, even her, with ſome degree of reſpect.

Mr. Francis, on the evening preceding the day on which he purpoſed leaving Morton Park, paſſing under the open window of my chamber, in which I was ſitting with a book to enjoy the refreſhing breeze, invited me to come down, and accompany him in a ramble. I immediately complied with his requeſt, and joined him in a few minutes, with a countenance clouded with regret at the idea of his quitting us.

"You are going," ſaid I, as I gave him my hand (which he paſſed under his arm), "and I loſe my friend and "counſellor."

"Your concern is obliging; but you "are capable of ſtanding alone, and

"your

"your mind, by ſo doing, will acquire "ſtrength."

"I feel as if this would not be the "caſe: the world appears to me a thorny "and a pathleſs wilderneſs; I ſtep with "caution, and look around me with dread. "—That I require protection and aſſiſt-"ance, is, I confeſs, a proof of weakneſs, "but it is nevertheleſs true."

"Mr. Montague," replied he, with ſome degree of archneſs in his tone and manner, "is a gallant knight, a pattern "of chivalry, and appears to be particu-"larly calculated for the defender of diſ-"treſſed damſels!"

"I have no inclination to truſt myſelf "to the guidance of one, who ſeems him-"ſelf entangled in an inextricable maze "of error, and whoſe verſatile character "affords little baſis for confidence."

"Tell me what it is you fear;——are "your apprehenſions founded in reaſon?"

"Recollect my youth, my ſex, and my "precarious ſituation."

"I thought you contemned the plea of "*ſex*, as a ſanction for weakneſs!"

"Though

"Though I diſallow it as a natural, I "admit it as an artificial, plea."

"Explain yourſelf."

"The character, you tell me, is modi- "fied by circumſtances: the cuſtoms of "ſociety, then, have enſlaved, enervated, "and degraded woman."

"I underſtand you: there is truth in "your remark, though you have given it "undue force."

I heſitated—my heart was full—I felt as if there were many things which I wiſhed to ſay; but, however paradoxical, the manners of Mr. Francis repreſſed, while they invited, confidence. I reſpected his reaſon, but I doubted whether I could inſpire him with ſympathy, or make him fully comprehend my feelings. I conceived I could expreſs myſelf with more freedom on paper; but I had not courage to requeſt a correſpondence, when he was ſilent on the ſubject. That it would be a ſource of improvement to me, I could not doubt, but prejudice with-held me from making the propoſal. He looked at me, and perceived my mind

ſtruggling

ſtruggling with a ſuggeſtion, to which it dared not give utterance: he ſuſpected the truth, but was unwilling to diſturb the operations of my underſtanding. We walked for ſome time in ſilence:—my companion ſtruck into a path that led towards the houſe—liſtened to the village clock as it ſtruck nine—and obſerved, the hour grew late. He had diſtinguiſhed me, and I was flattered by that diſtinction; he had ſupported me againſt the arrogance of Mrs. Morton, retorted the ſly ſarcaſms of Sarah, and even helped to keep the impetuous Montague in awe, and obliged him to rein in his offenſive ſpirit, every moment on the brink of outrage. My heart, formed for grateful attachment, taking, in one inſtant, a haſty retroſpect of the paſt, and a rapid glance into futurity, experienced at that moment ſo deſolating a pang, that I endeavoured in vain to repreſs its ſenſations, and burſt into a flood of tears. Mr. Francis ſuddenly ſtopped, appeared moved, and, with a benevolent aſpect and ſoothing accents, enquired into the cauſe of an emotion ſo ſudden and

unexpected.

unexpected. I wept a few minutes in ſilence, and my ſpirits ſeemed, in ſome meaſure, relieved.

"I weep, (ſaid I,) becauſe I am "*friendleſs*; to be eſteemed and cheriſhed "is neceſſary to my exiſtence; I am an "alien in the family where I at preſent re- "ſide, I cannot remain here much longer, "and to whom, and whither, ſhall I go?

He took my hand—"I will not, at "preſent, ſay all that it might be proper "to ſay, becauſe I perceive your mind is "in a feeble ſtate;—My affairs call me to "London;—yet, there is a method of "converſing at a diſtance."

I eagerly availed myſelf of this ſuggeſtion, which I had wiſhed, without having the courage to propoſe.

"Will you, then, allow me, through "the medium of pen and paper, to ad- "dreſs, to conſult you, as I may ſee oc- "caſion?"

"Will I? yes, moſt cheerfully! Pro- "poſe your doubts and ſtate your diffi- "culties, and we ſhall ſee, (ſmiling) whe- "ther they admit of a ſolution."

Thanking him, I engaged to avail myſelf of this permiſſion, and we proceeded ſlowly to the houſe, and joined the party in the ſupper room. I never once thought of my red and ſwoln eyes, till Sarah, glancing a look half curious, half ſarcaſtic, towards me, exclaimed from Shakeſpear, in an affected tone,

"Parting is ſuch ſweet ſorrow!"

Mr. Francis looked at her ſternly, ſhe bluſhed and was ſilent; Mr. Montague was captious; Ann mortified, that ſhe could not by her little tricks gain his attention. Mrs. Morton ſat wrapped in mock dignity; while Mr. Morton, and his philoſophic friend, canvaſſed the principles upon which an horizontal mill was about to be conſtructed on the eſtate of the former. After a ſhort and ſcanty meal, I retired to my apartmen, determined to riſe early the next morning, and make breakfaſt for my friend before his departure.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XIV.

MR. Francis had ordered his horſe to be ready at five o'clock. I left my chamber at four, to have the pleaſure of preparing for him the laſt friendly repaſt, and of ſaying *farewel*. He was ſerene and chearful as uſual, I ſomewhat more penſive; we parted with great cordiality, he gave me his addreſs in town, and engaged me to write to him ſhortly. I accompanied him through the Park to the porter's lodge, where the ſervant and horſes waited his coming. My eyes gliſtened as I bade him adieu, and reiterated my wiſhes for his ſafety and proſperity, while his features ſoftened into a more than uſual benignity, as he returned my ſalutation.

I wandered thoughtfully back towards the houſe, but the rich purple that began to illumine the eaſt, the harbinger of the riſing ſun, the freſhneſs of the morning air, the ſoft dews which already glittered on

every fragrant plant and flower, the ſolemn ſtillneſs, ſo grateful to the reflecting mind, that pervaded the ſcene, induced me to prolong my walk. Every object appeared in uniſon with my feelings, my heart ſwelled with devotional affections, it aſpired to the Author of nature. After having bewildered ourſelves amid ſyſtems and theories, religion, in ſuch ſituations, returns to the ſuſceptible mind as a *ſentiment* rather than as a principle. A paſſing cloud let fall a gentle, drizzling ſhower; ſheltered beneath the leafy umbrage of a ſpreading oak, I rather heard than felt it; yet, the coolneſs it diffuſed ſeemed to quench thoſe ardent emotions, which are but too congenial with my diſpoſition, while the tumult of the paſſions ſubſided into a delicious tranquillity.

How mutable are human beings!—A very few hours converted this ſublime complacency into perturbation and tumult. Having extended my walk beyond its accuſtomed limits, on my return, I retired, ſomewhat fatigued to my apartment, and devoted the morning to my

ſtudies. At the dinner hour I joined the family, each individual of which ſeemed wrapped up in reſerve, ſcarcely deigning to practiſe the common ceremonies of the occaſion. I was not ſufficiently intereſted in the cauſe of theſe appearances to make any enquiries, and willingly reſigned myſelf, in the intervals of the entertainment, to meditation.

When the table was cleared, and the ſervants had withdrawn, perceiving the party not ſociably inclined, I was about to retire—when Mrs. Morton obſerved, with features full of a meaning which I did not comprehend, that—

" Their gueſt, Mr. Francis, had, no " doubt, left Morton Park gratefully im- " preſſed by the *kindneſs* of Miſs Courtney."

Montague reddened—bit his lips—got up—and ſat down again. The young ladies wore an air not perfectly good-humoured, and a little triumphant. Mr. Moreton looked very ſolemn.

" I hope ſo, Madam," I replied, ſomewhat careleſsly. " I felt myſelf indebted " to Mr. Francis for his civilities, and

" was ſolicitous to make him all the re-
" turn in my power—I wiſh that power
" had been enlarged."

She held up her hands and eyes with an affected, and ridiculous, geſture.

" Mr. Francis," ſaid Montague, abruptly, " is very happy in having inſpired
" you with ſentiments *ſo partial*."

" I am not partial—I am merely juſt.
" Mr. Francis appeared to me a rational
" man, and my underſtanding was ex-
" erciſed and gratified by his converſa-
" tion."

I was about to proceed, but my uncle (who ſeemed to have been tutored for the occaſion) interrupted me with much gravity.

" You are but little acquainted, Emma,
" with the cuſtoms of ſociety; there is
" a great indecorum in a young lady's
" making theſe diſtinctions."

" What diſtinctions, my dear Sir!—in
" prefering a reaſonable man to fools and
" coxcombs?"

" Forgive me, my dear—you have a
" quick wit, but you want experience. I
" am

"am informed, that you breakfaſted with "Mr. Francis this morning, and attended "him through the Park:——this, with "your late walk yeſterday evening, and "evident emotion on your return, let me "tell you, child, wears an indecorous ap-"pearance:—the world is juſtly attentive "to the conduct of young women, and "too apt to be cenſorious."

I looked round me with unaffected ſurprize—"Good God!—did I ſuppoſe, "in this family, it was neceſſary to be "upon my guard againſt malicious con-"ſtructions?"

"Pray,"—interrupted Sarah, pertly—"would you not have expreſſed ſome ſur-"prize, had I ſhewed Mr. Montague "ſimilar attentions?"

I looked at her, I believe, a little too contemptuouſly.—"Whatever ſentiments "might have been excited in my mind "by the attentions of Miſs Morton "to Mr. Montague, *ſurprize*, aſſuredly, "would not have been among them."

She coloured, and Montague's paſſions began to riſe. I ſtopped him in the be-

ginning of an impertinent harangue, by obſerving—

"That I did not think myſelf account-
"able to him for my conduct;—before I
"ſhould be ſolicitous reſpecting his opi-
"nions, he muſt give me better reaſons,
"than he had hitherto done, to reſpect his
"judgment."

Ann wept, and prattled ſomething, to which nobody thought it worth while to attend.

"Well, Sir," continued I, turning to Mr. Morton, "be pleaſed to give me, in
"detail, what you have to alledge, that I
"may be enabled to juſtify myſelf."

"Will you allow me to aſk you a queſ-
"tion?"

"Moſt certainly."

"Has Mr. Francis engaged you to
"correſpond with him?"

I was ſilent a few moments.

"You heſitate!"

"Only, Sir, *how* to anſwer your queſ-
"tion.——I certainly intend myſelf the
"pleaſure of addreſſing Mr. Francis on
"paper; but I cannot ſtrictly ſay *he*

"*engaged*

" *engaged* me ſo to do, as it was a propo-
" ſal he was led to make, by conjecturing
" my wiſhes on the ſubject."

Again, Mrs. Morton, with uplifted hands and eyes—" What effrontery!"

I ſeemed not to hear her.——" Have
" you any thing more to ſay, my dear
" uncle?"

" You are a ſtrange girl. It would
" not, perhaps, be proper before this
" company to enquire"—and he ſtopped.

" Any thing is proper, Sir, to enquire
" of me, and in any company—I have no
" reſerves, no ſecrets."

" Well, then, I think it neceſſary to
" inform you, that, though a ſenſible,
" well educated, liberal-minded, man,
" Mr. Francis has neither eſtate nor for-
" tune, nor does he practiſe any lucrative
" profeſſion."

" I am ſorry for it, on his own account,
" and for thoſe whom his generoſity might
" benefit. But, what is it to me?"

" You affect to miſunderſtand me."

" I *affect* nothing."

"I will ſpeak more plainly:—Has he "made you any propoſals?"

The purport of this ſolemn, but ludicrous, preparation, at once flaſhed upon my mind, the firſt time the thought had ever occurred. I laughed—I could not help it.

"I conſidered Mr. Francis as a *philo-* "*ſopher*, and not as a *lover*. Does this "ſatisfy you, Sir?"

My uncle's features, in ſpite of himſelf, relaxed into a half-ſmile.

"Very platonic—ſweet ſimplicity!"—drauled out Mrs. Morton, in ironical accents.

"I will not be inſulted, Mr. Morton!" quitting my ſeat, and riſing in temper.—"I conſider myſelf, merely, as your viſit-"ant, and not as reſponſible to any one "for my actions. Conſcious of purity "of intention, and ſuperior to all diſguiſe "or evaſion, I was not aware of theſe fe-"minine, indelicate, unfriendly ſuggeſ-"tions. If this behaviour be a ſpecimen "of what I am to expect in the world—"the world may do its will—but I will

"never

"never be its ſlave: while I have ſtrength
"of mind to form principles, and cou-
"rage to act upon them, I am deter-
"mined to preſerve my freedom, and
"truſt to the general candour and good
"ſenſe of mankind to appreciate me
"juſtly. As the brother of my late fa-
"ther, and as entitled to reſpect from
"your own kind intentions, I am willing
"to enter into any explanations, which
"*you*, *Sir*, may think neceſſary:—neither
"my motives, nor my actions, have ever
"yet ſhrunk from inveſtigation. Will
"you permit me to attend you in your
"library? It is not my intention to in-
"trude longer on your hoſpitality, and I
"could wiſh to avail myſelf of your ex-
"perience and counſels reſpecting my
"future deſtination."

Mr. Morton, at my requeſt, withdrew with me into the library, where I quickly removed from his mind thoſe injurious ſuſpicions with which Mrs. Morton had laboured to inſpire him. He would not hear of my removal from the Park—apologized for what had paſſed—aſſured me

of his friendſhip and protection—and entreated me to conſider his houſe as my home. There was an honeſt warmth and ſincerity in his manner, that ſenſibly affected me; I could have wept; and I engaged, at his repeated requeſt, not to think, at preſent, of withdrawing myſelf from his protection. Thus we ſeparated.

How were the virtues of this really good man tarniſhed by an unſuitable connection! In the giddy hours of youth, we thoughtleſsly ruſh into engagements, that fetter our minds, and affect our future characters, without reflecting on the important conſequences of our conduct. This is a ſubject on which I have had occaſion to reflect deeply; yet, alas! my own boaſted reaſon has been, but too often, the dupe of my imagination.

## CHAP. XV.

NOTHING, here, occupied my heart—a heart to which it was neceſſary to love and admire. I had ſuffered myſelf

myſelf to be irritated—the tumult of my ſpirits did not eaſily ſubſide—I was mortified at the reflection—I had believed myſelf armed with patience and fortitude, but my philoſophy was ſwept before the impetuous emotions of my paſſions like chaff before the whirlwind. I took up my pen to calm my ſpirits, and addreſſed myſelf to the man who had been, unconſciouſly, the occaſion of theſe vexations.—My ſwelling heart needed the relief of communication.

TO MR. FRANCIS.

"I SOUGHT earneſtly for the privilege of addreſſing you on paper. My mind ſeemed to overflow with a thouſand ſentiments, that I had not the courage to expreſs in words; but now, when the period is arrived, that I can take up my pen, unawed by your penetrating glance, unchecked by your poignant reply, and pour out my ſpirit before you, I feel as if its emotions were too wayward, too viſionary,

viſionary, too contradictory, to merit your attention.

"Every thing I ſee and hear is a diſappointment to me:—brought up in retirement—converſing only with books—dwelling with ardour on the great characters, and heroic actions, of antiquity, all my ideas of honour and diſtinction were aſſociated with thoſe of virtue and talents. I conceived, that the purſuit of truth, and the advancement of reaſon, were the grand objects of univerſal attention, and I panted to do homage to thoſe ſuperior minds, who, teaching mankind to be wiſe, would at length lead them to happineſs. Accuſtomed to think, to feel, to kindle into action, I am at a loſs to underſtand the diſtinction between theory and practice, which every one ſeems eager to inculcate, as if the degrading and melancholy intelligence, which fills my ſoul with deſpondency, and pervades my underſtanding with gloom, was to them a ſubject of exultation.

"Is virtue, then, a chimera—does it exiſt only in the regions of romance?—

Have

Have we any intereſt in finding our fellow creatures weak and miſerable?—Is the Being who formed them unjuſt, capricious, impotent, or tyrannical?

"Anſwer theſe queſtions, that preſs heavily on my mind, that dart acroſs it, in its brighteſt moments, clouding its ſun-ſhine with a thick and impenetrable darkneſs. Muſt the benevolent emotions, which I have hitherto delighted to cheriſh, turn into miſanthropy—muſt the fervent and ſocial affections of my heart give place to inanity, to apathy—muſt the activity of a curious and vigorous mind ſink into torpor and abhorred vacuity?

"While they teach me to diſtruſt the exiſtence of virtue, they endeavour to impoſe on me, in its ſtead, a fictitious ſemblance; and to ſubſtitute, for the pure gold of truth, a paltry tinſel. It is in vain I aſk—what have thoſe to do with '*ſeeming*,' who ſtill retain 'that which '*paſſeth ſhew?*' However my actions may be corrupted by the contagious example of the world, may I ſtill hold faſt

faſt my integrity, and diſdain to wear the *appearance* of virtue, when the ſubſtance ſhall no longer exiſt.

"To admire, to eſteem, to love, are congenial to my nature—I am unhappy, becauſe theſe affections are not called into exerciſe. To venerate abſtract perfection, requires too vigorous an exertion of the mental powers—I would ſee virtue exemplified, I would love it in my fellow creatures—I would catch the glorious enthuſiaſm, and riſe from created to uncreated excellence.

"I am perplexed with doubts; relieve the wanderings of my mind, ſolve the difficulties by which it is agitated, prepare me for the world which is before me. The proſpect, no longer beaming with light, no longer glowing with a thouſand vivid hues, is overſpread with miſts, which the mind's eye vainly attempts to penetrate. I would feel, again, the value of exiſtence, the worth of rectitude, the certainty of truth, the bleſſing of hope! Ah! tell me not—that the gay expectations of youth have been the meteors of fancy,

fancy, the viſions of a romantic and diſtempered imagination! If I muſt not live to realize them, I would not live at all.

"My harraſſed mind turns to you! You will not ridicule its ſcruples—you will, at leaſt, deign to reaſon with me, and, in the exerciſe of my underſtanding, I ſhall experience a temporary relief from the ſenſations which devour me, the ſuſpicions that diſtreſs me, and which ſpread over futurity a fearful veil.

"EMMA."

I walked to the next market town, and left my letter at the poſt-houſe.—I waited impatiently for a reply; my mind wanted *impreſſion*, and ſunk into languor. The anſwer, which arrived in a few days, was kind, becauſe it was prompt, my ſickly mind required a ſpeedy remedy.

TO EMMA COURTNEY.

"WHY will you thus take things in maſſes, and continually dwell in extremes?

tremes? You deceive yourſelf; inſtead of cultivating your reaſon, you are foſtering an exceſſive ſenſibility, a faſtidious delicacy. It is the buſineſs of reaſon to compare, to ſeparate, to diſcriminate. Is there no medium—extraordinary exertions are only called forth by extraordinary contingences;—becauſe every human being is not a hero, are we then to diſtruſt the exiſtence of virtue?

"The mind is modified by the circumſtances in which it is placed, by the accidents of birth and education; the conſtitutions of ſociety are all, as yet, imperfect; they have generated, and perpetuated, many miſtakes—the conſequences of thoſe miſtakes will, eventually, carry with them their antidote, the ſeeds of reproduction are, even, viſible in their decay. The growth of reaſon is ſlow, but not the leſs ſure; the increaſe of knowledge muſt neceſſarily prepare the way for the increaſe of virtue and happineſs.

"Look back upon the early periods of ſociety, and, taking a retroſpective view of what has been done, amidſt the interruptions

ruptions of barbarous inroads, falling empires, and palſying deſpotiſm, calculate what yet may be atchieved: while the cauſes, which have hitherto impeded the progreſs of civilization, muſt continue to decreaſe, in an accelerated ratio, with the wide, and ſtill wider, diffuſion of truth.

"We may trace moſt of the faults, and the miſeries of mankind, to the vices and errors of political inſtitutions, their permanency having been their radical defect. Like children, we have dreamt, that what gratifies our deſires, or contributes to our convenience, to-day, will prove equally uſeful and ſatisfactory to-morrow, without reflecting on the growth of the body, the change of humours, the new objects, and the new ſituations, which every ſucceeding hour brings in its train. That immutability, which conſtitutes the perfection of what we (from poverty of language) term the *divine mind*, would inevitably be the bane of creatures liable to error; it is of the conſtancy, rather than of the fickleneſs, of human beings, that we have reaſon to complain.

"Every

"Every improvement muſt be the reſult of ſucceſſive experiments, this has been found true in natural ſcience, and it muſt be univerſally applied to be univerſally beneficial. Bigotry, whether religious, political, moral, or commercial, is the canker-worm at the root of the tree of knowledge and of virtue. The wildeſt ſpeculations are leſs miſchievous than the torpid ſtate of error: he, who tamely reſigns his underſtanding to the guidance of another, ſinks at once, from the dignity of a rational being, to a mechanical puppet, moved at pleaſure on the wires of the artful operator.—*Impoſition* is the principle and ſupport of every varied deſcription of tyranny, whether civil or eccleſiaſtical, moral or mental; its baneful conſequence is to degrade both him who is impoſed on, and him who impoſes. *Obedience*, is a word, which ought never to have had exiſtence: as we recede from conviction, and languidly reſign ourſelves to any foreign authority, we quench the principle of action, of virtue, of reaſon;—we bear about

about the ſemblance of humanity, but the ſpirit is fled.

"Theſe are truths, which will ſlowly, but ultimately, prevail; in the ſplendour of which, the whole fabric of ſuperſtition will gradually fade and melt away. The world, like every individual, has it progreſs from infancy to maturity—How many follies do we commit in childhood? how many errors are we precipitated into by the fervor and inexperience of youth! Is not every ſtable principle acquired through innumerable miſtakes—can you wonder, that in ſociety, amidſt the aggregate of jarring intereſts and paſſions, reformation is ſo tardy? Though civilization has been impeded by innumerable obſtacles, even theſe help to carry on the great work: empires may be overturned, and the arts ſcattered, but not loſt. The hordes of barbarians, which overwhelmed ancient Rome, adopted at length the religion, the laws, and the improvements of the vanquiſhed, as Rome had before done thoſe of Greece. As the ſtone, which, thrown into the water, ſpreads circles ſtill more

more and more extended;—or (to adopt the goſpel ſimilitude) as the grain of muſtard ſeed, growing up into a large tree, ſhelters the fowls of heaven in its branches—ſo will knowledge, at length, diffuſe itſelf, till it covers the whole earth.

"When the minds of men are changed, the ſyſtem of things will alſo change; but theſe changes, though active and inceſſant, muſt be gradual. Reaſon will fall ſoftly, and almoſt imperceptibly, like a gentle ſhower of dews, fructifying the ſoil, and preparing it for future harveſts. Let us not reſemble the ambitious ſhepherd, who, calling for the accumulated waters of the Nile upon his lands, was, with his flock, ſwept away in the impetuous torrent.

"You aſk, whether—becauſe human beings are ſtill imperfect—you are to reſign your benevolence, and to cheriſh miſanthropy? What a queſtion! Would you hate the inhabitants of an hoſpital for being infected with a peſtilential diſorder? Let us remember, that vice originates in miſtakes of the underſtanding, and

and that, he who ſeeks happineſs by means contradictory and deſtructive, *is emphatically the ſinner*. Our duties, then, are obvious—If ſelfiſh and violent paſſions have been generated by the inequalities of ſociety, we muſt labour to counteract them, by endeavouring to combat prejudice, to expand the mind, to give comprehenſive views, to teach mankind their true intereſt, and to lead them to habits of goodneſs and greatneſs. Every prejudice conquered, every miſtake rectified, every individual improved, is an advance upon the great ſcale of virtue and happineſs.

"Let it, then, be your nobleſt ambition to co-operate with, to join your efforts, to thoſe of philoſophers and ſages, the benefactors of mankind. To waſte our time in uſeleſs repinings is equally weak and vain; every one in his ſphere may do ſomething; each has a little circle where his influence will be availing. Correct your own errors, which are various—weeds in a luxuriant ſoil—and you will have done ſomething towards the general reformation. But you are able to

do

do more;—be vigilant, be active, beware of the illuſions of fancy! I ſuſpect, that you will have much to ſuffer—may you, at length, reap the fruits of a wholeſome, though it ſhould be a bitter, experience.

"——— FRANCIS."

I peruſed the letter, I had received, again and again; it awakened a train of intereſting reflections, and my ſpirits became tranquillized.

## CHAP. XVI.

EARLY one fine morning, Ann tapped gently at the door of my chamber; I had already riſen, and invited her to enter.

"Would I accompany her to breakfaſt, "with a widow lady, who reſided in a vil- "lage about two miles from Morton Park, "an occaſional viſitant in the family, a "lady with whom, ſhe was certain, I "ſhould be charmed."

I ſmiled

I ſmiled at her ardour, thanked her for her kindneſs, and readily agreed to her propoſal. We ſtrolled together through an adjacent wood, which, by a ſhady and winding path, conducted us towards the reſidence of this vaunted favourite of my little companion.

On our way, ſhe entertained me with a ſlight ſketch of the hiſtory of Mrs. Harley and her family. She was the widow of a merchant, who was ſuppoſed to poſſeſs great property; but, practiſing occaſionally as an underwriter, a conſiderable capture by the enemy (during war time) of ſome rich ſhips, reduced his fortune; and, by the conſequent anxiety, completely deſtroyed a before debilitated conſtitution. He died in a few weeks after the confirmation of his loſs, and, having neglected to make a will, a freehold eſtate of ſome value, which was all that remained of his effects, devolved of courſe to his eldeſt ſon; his two younger ſons and three daughters being left wholly unprovided for. Auguſtus Harley, the heir, immediately ſold the eſtate, and divided the

produce, in equal ſhares, between each individual of the family. His brothers had been educated for commerce, and were enabled, through the generous kindneſs of Auguſtus, to carry on, with advantage and reputation, their reſpective occupations; the ſiſters were, ſoon after, eligibly married. Auguſtus, who had been educated for the law, diſguſted with its chicanery, relinquiſhed the profeſſion, content to reſtrain his expences within the limits of a narrow income. This income had ſince received an increaſe, by the bequeſt of a diſtant relation, a man of a whimſical character, who had married, early in life, a beautiful woman, for love; but his wife having eloped from him with an officer, and, in the courſe of the intrigue, practiſed a variety of deceptions, he had retired diſguſted from ſociety, cheriſhing a miſanthropical ſpirit: and, on his deceaſe, bequeathed an annual ſum of four hundred pounds to Auguſtus Harley, (to whom in his childhood he had been particularly attached) on condition of his remaining unmarried. On his marriage,

or

or death, this legacy paſſed into another branch of the family. On this acquiſition Auguſtus determined on making the tour of Europe; and, after travelling on the continent for three years, on his return to his native country, alternately reſided, either in the village of ——, with his mother, or in the metropolis, where he divided his time, between liberal ſtudies, and rational recreation. His viſits to the country had, of late, been ſhorter and leſs frequent: he was the idol of his mother, and univerſally reſpected by his acquaintance, for his noble and generous conduct.—" Ah! (added the lively narrator) " could you but ſee Auguſtus Harley, " you would, infallibly, loſe your heart—ſo " frank, ſo pleaſant, ſo ingenuous are his " manners, ſo intrepid, and yet ſo humane! " Montague is a fine gentleman, but Au- " guſtus Harley is more—*he is a man!*"

She began to grow eloquent on this, apparently, exhauſtleſs theme, nor did ſhe ceaſe her panegyric till we came in view of Mrs. Harley's manſion.

"You will love the mother as well as "the ſon," continued this agreeable prattler, "when you come to know her; ſhe is "very good and very ſenſible."

Drawing near the houſe, ſhe tripped from me, to enquire if its miſtreſs had yet riſen.

A ſmall white tenement, half obſcured in ſhrubbery, on a verdant lawn, of dimenſions equally modeſt, ſituated on the ſide of a hill, and commanding an extenſive and variegated proſpect, was too intereſting and pictureſque an object, not to engage for ſome moments my attention. The image of Auguſtus, alſo, which my lively companion had pourtrayed with more than her uſual vivacity, played in my fancy—my heart paid involuntary homage to virtue, and I entered the manſion of Mrs. Harley with a ſwelling emotion, made up of complicated feelings—half reſpectful, half tender—ſentiments, too mingled to be diſtinctly traced. I was introduced into a room that overlooked a pleaſant garden, and which the ſervant called a library. It

was

was hung with green paper, the carpet the ſame colour, green venetian blinds to the windows, a ſopha and chairs covered with white dimity; ſome drawings and engravings hung on the walls, arranged with exact ſymmetry; on one ſide of the room ſtood a grand piano-forte, oppoſite to which, was a handſome book-caſe, filled with books, elegantly bound; in the middle of the apartment was placed a table, covered with a green cloth, on which was a reading deſk, ſome books and pamphlets, with implements for writing and drawing. Nothing ſeemed coſtly, yet neatneſs, order, and taſte, appeared through the whole apartment, beſpeaking the elegant and cultivated mind of the owner.

After amuſing myſelf for a ſhort time, in this charming retirement, I was ſummoned by Ann to the breakfaſt room, where Mrs. Harley awaited me. I was intereſted, at the firſt glance, in favour of this amiable woman—ſhe appeared to be near fifty, her perſon agreeable, her countenance animated, her addreſs enga-

ging, and her manners poliſhed. Mutually pleaſed with each other, the hours paſſed rapidly; and, till reminded by a ſignificant look from my little friend, I was unconſcious, that I had made my viſit of an unreaſonable length.

Mrs. Harley ſpoke much of her ſon, he was the darling and the pride of her heart; ſhe lamented the diſtance that ſeparated them, and wiſhed, that her health, and his tenderneſs, would allow of her reſidence with him in London. When converſing on this favourite topic, a glow enlivened her countenance, and her eyes ſparkled with a humid brightneſs. I was affected by her maternal love—tender remembrances, and painful compariſons, crouded into my mind—a tear fell, that would not be twinkled away—ſhe obſerved it, and ſeemed to feel its meaning; ſhe held out her hand to me, I took it and preſſed it to my lips. At parting, ſhe entreated me ſpeedily to renew my viſit, to come often without ceremony—I ſhould cheer her ſolitude—my ſympathy, for ſhe perceived I had a feeling heart,

would

would help to conſole her in the abſence of her Auguſtus.

## CHAP. XVII.

ON our way home, Ann was in high ſpirits, congratulating herſelf upon her ſagacity.

"Mrs. Harley, (ſaid ſhe, archly leering in my face) "will conſole you for the de-"parture of Mr. Francis."

I ſmiled without replying. At dinner our viſit of the morning was canvaſſed (Ann had wiſhed me to conceal it, but this I poſitively refuſed). Mr. Morton ſpoke of Mrs. Harley and her ſon with great reſpect, Mrs. Morton with a ſarcaſtic ſneer, accompanied with a reprimand to her daughter, for the improper liberty ſhe had taken.

I quitted the table, immediately after the deſert, to ſtifle my diſguſt, and, taking a book, wandered into the pleaſure grounds, but incapable of fixing my at-

tention, I preſently ſhut my book, and, ſauntering ſlowly on, indulged in a reverie. My melancholy reflections again returned—How could I remain in a houſe, where I was every day marked out for inſult by its miſtreſs—and where was I to diſpoſe of myſelf? My fortune was inſufficient to allow of my boarding in a reſpectable family. Mrs. Harley came acroſs my mind———Amiable woman!—Would ſhe, indeed, accept of my ſociety, and allow me to ſoften her ſolitude!—But her income was little leſs limited than my own—it muſt not be thought of. I reflected on the inequalities of ſociety, the ſource of every miſery and of every vice, and on the peculiar diſadvantages of my ſex. I ſighed bitterly; and, claſping my hands together, exclaimed, unconſciouſly—

"Whither can I go—and where ſhall "I find an aſylum?"

"Allow me to propoſe one," ſaid a voice, in a ſoft accent, ſuddenly, behind me.

I ſtarted,

I ſtarted, turned, and beheld Mr. Montague. After ſome expreſſions of ſympathy for the diſtreſs which he had witneſſed, apologies for his intruſion, and incoherent expreſſions of reſpect and regard, he ſomewhat abruptly offered his hand and heart to my acceptance, with the impetuoſity which accompanied all his ſentiments and actions; yet, he expreſſed himſelf with the air of a man who believes he is conferring an obligation. I thanked him for his generous propoſal—

But, as my heart ſpake not in his favour—"I muſt be allowed to decline it."

"That heart," ſaid he, rudely, "is "already beſtowed upon another."

"Certainly not, Mr. Montague; if it "were, I would frankly tell you."

He pronounced the name of Mr. Francis—

"Mr. Francis is a man for whom I "feel a ſincere reſpect and veneration— "a man whom I ſhould be proud to call "my friend; but a thought beyond that, I "dare venture to ſay, has never occurred "to either of us."

He knew not how to conceive—that a woman in my ſituation, unprepoſſeſſed, could reject ſo advantageous an eſtabliſhment!

This, I told him, was indelicate, both to me and to himſelf. Were my ſituation yet more deſolate, I would not marry any man, merely for an *eſtabliſhment*, for whom I did not feel an affection.

Would I pleaſe to deſcribe to him the model of perfection which I ſhould require in a huſband?

It was unneceſſary; as I ſaw no probability of the portrait bearing any reſemblance to himſelf.

He reddened, and turned pale, alternately; bit his lips, and muttered to himſelf.—"Damned romantic affectation!"

I aſſumed a firmer tone—methought he inſulted me.—"I beg you will leave "me, Sir—I chuſe to be alone—By what "right do you intrude upon my retire-"ments?"

My determined accent abaſhed him:—he tried, but with an ill grace, to be humble;

humble; and entreated me to take time for conſideration.

"There is no need of it. It is a prin-
"ciple with me, not to inflict a moment's
"ſuſpence on any human being, when
"my own mind is decided."

"Then you abſolutely refuſe me, and
"prefer the being expoſed to the mean
"and envious inſults of the vulgar miſ-
"treſs of this manſion!"

"Of the two evils, I conſider it as the
"leaſt, becauſe it involves no permanent
"obligation."

His countenance was convulſed with paſſion. His love, he told me, was converted into vengeance by my ſcorn: he was not to be contemned with impunity; and he warned me to beware.

I ſmiled, I believe, a little too contemptuouſly. "You love me not, Sir:
"I am glad, for your own ſake, that you
"never loved me."

"My hatred may be more terrible!"

"You cannot intimidate me——I am
"little accuſtomed to fear."

I turned from him ſomewhat diſdainfully: but, inſtantly recollecting myſelf, I ſtepped back, and apologized for the harſh manner into which I had been betrayed by his abrupt addreſs, vehement expoſtulation, and the previous irritated ſtate of my mind.

"I acknowledge," ſaid I, "the diſintereſtedneſs of your propoſal, and the "*diſtinction* which it implies. Will you allow my own wounded feelings to be an "excuſe for the too little conſideration with "which I have treated *your's?* Can you "forgive me?" added I, in a conciliating tone, holding out my hand.

The ſtrong emotions, which rapidly ſucceeded each other in his mind, were painted in his countenance. After a moment's heſitation, he ſnatched the hand I offered him, preſſed it to his lips, and, murmuring a few incoherent words, burſt into tears. My ſpirits were already depreſſed—affected by theſe marks of his ſenſibility, and ſtill more diſtreſſed by the recollection of the pain I had occaſioned

him by my inconſiderate behaviour, I wept with him for ſome minutes in ſilence.

"Let us no more," reſumed I, making an effort to recover myſelf, "renew theſe "impreſſions. I thank you ſincerely for "the ſympathy you have manifeſted for "my ſituation. I am ſenſible that I have "yielded to weak and wayward feelings. "—I have youth, health, and activity— "I ought not—neither do I deſpair.— "The mortifications I have experienced, "ſince my reſidence here, will afford me "a uſeful leſſon for the future—they have "already taught me, what I before mere- "ly conjectured, *the value of indepen- "dence!*"

"Why, then," interrupted he with quickneſs, "do you reject an opportu- "nity of placing yourſelf out of the reach "of inſult?"

"Stop, my good friend," replied I, ſmilingly looking in his face; "there is "a poſſibility of exchanging evils. You "are yet too young, and too unſtable, "maturely to have weighed the import- "ance of the ſcheme you propoſe. Re-

"member,

"member, likewiſe, that you are, your-
"ſelf, in a great meaſure, dependent on
"the will of your father; and that much
"reflection is requiſite before we fetter
"ourſelves with engagements, that, once
"entered into, are not eaſily diſſolved."

"You allow me, then, to hope!"

"Indeed I meant not to imply any
"ſuch thing. I wiſh to ſoften what I
"have already expreſſed—but, there are
"a variety of reaſons which oblige me to
"aſſure you, that I ſee no probability of
"changing my ſentiments on the ſub-
"ject."

"Why, then, this cruel oſtentation? I
"would either love or hate, bleſs or curſe
"you."

"You ſhall do neither, if I can prevent
"it. If my eſteem is of any value to
"you, you muſt learn to reſpect both me
"and yourſelf."

"Eſteem!—Is that to be my frigid re-
"ward!"

"If *mine* be worthleſs, propoſe to
"yourſelf *your own* as a recompenſe."

"I have

"I have already forfeited it, by ſeeking "to move a heart, that triumphs in its "cold inflexibility."

"Is this juſt—is it kind? Is it, in- "deed, *my welfare* you ſeek, while you "can thus add to the vexations and em- "barraſſment, which were before ſuf- "ficiently oppreſſive? I would preſerve "you from an act of precipitation and "imprudence;—in return, you load me "with unmerited reproaches. But it is "time to put an end to a converſation, "that can anſwer little other purpoſe "than vain recrimination."

He was about to ſpeak——"Say no "more—I feel myſelf, again, in danger "of loſing my temper—my ſpirits are "agitated—I would not give you pain— "Allow me to retire, and be aſſured of "my beſt wiſhes."

Some of the family appearing in ſight, as if advancing towards us, favoured my retreat. I quitted the place with precipitation, and retired to my chamber, where I ſought, by employing myſelf, to calm the perturbation of my heart.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XVIII.

IN a few days I renewed my viſit to Mrs. Harley:—a ſtrong ſympathy united us, and we became almoſt inſeparable. Every day I diſcovered in this admirable woman a new and indiſſoluble tie, that bound me to her. Her cultivated underſtanding afforded an inexhauſtible fund of inſtruction and entertainment; and her affectionate heart ſpread a charm over her moſt indifferent actions. We read, we walked, we converſed together; but, with whatever ſubjects theſe converſations commenced, ſome aſſociated idea always led them to terminate in an eulogium on the virtues and talents, or an expreſſion of regret, for the abſence of Auguſtus. There was a portrait of him (drawn by a celebrated artiſt, which he had lately ſent from town as a preſent to his mother) hung up in the library. I accuſtomed myſelf to gaze on this reſemblance of a man, in whoſe character I felt ſo lively an intereſt, till, I fancied, I

read

read in the features all the qualities imputed to the original by a tender and partial parent.

Cut off from the ſociety of mankind, and unable to expound my ſenſations, all the ſtrong affections of my ſoul ſeemed concentrated to a ſingle point. Without being conſcious of it myſelf, my grateful love for Mrs. Harley had, already, by a tranſition eaſy to be traced by a philoſophic mind, transferred itſelf to her ſon. He was the St. Preux, the Emilius, of my ſleeping and waking reveries. I now ſpent almoſt my whole time in the cottage of my friend, returning to Morton Park late in the evening, and quitting it early in the morning, and ſometimes being wholly abſent for weeks together.

Six months thus paſſed away in tranquillity, with but little variation. Mr. Montague, during this period, had ſeveral times left Mr. Morton's, and returned again abruptly: his manners became ſullen, and even, at times, ferocious. I carefully avoided encountering him, fearful

ful of exaſperating a ſpirit, that appeared every moment on the verge of exceſs.

Haſtening one evening to my friend, after a longer ſeparation than common, (having been prevailed on by Mr. Morton and his daughters to accompany them on a diſtant viſit, where buſineſs of Mr. Morton's detained us for ſome days) I ran into the library, as uſual, and threw myſelf into the arms of Mrs. Harley, that opened ſpontaneouſly to receive me.

"Ah! you little truant," ſaid ſhe, in a voice of kindneſs, "where have you "been ſo long? My ſon has viſited me "in your abſence; he paſſed through this "part of the country, in his way to the "ſeat of a friend. He ſtaid with me two "days, during which I ſent half a dozen "meſſages to Morton Park, but you "were flown away, it ſeems, nor could I "learn any tidings of you. Auguſtus," continued ſhe, without obſerving the emotions ſhe excited, "had ſcarcely "quitted the houſe an hour when you "arrived."

I made

I made no reply; an unaccountable ſenſation ſeized, and oppreſſed, my heart —ſinking on the ſopha, I burſt into a convulſive flood of tears.

My friend was ſtruck: all the indiſcretion of her conduct (as ſhe has ſince told me) flaſhed ſuddenly into her mind; ſhe felt that, in indulging her own maternal ſenſations, ſhe had, perhaps, done me an irreparable injury, and ſhe ſhuddered at the probable conſequences. It was ſome moments before either of us recovered; —our converſation was that evening, for the firſt time, conſtrained, reſerved, and painful; and we retired at an early hour to our reſpective apartments.

I ſpent the night in ſelf-examination. I was compelled to acknowledge, to myſelf, that ſolitude, the abſence of other impreſſions, the previous circumſtances that had operated on my character, my friendſhip for Mrs. Harley, and her eloquent, affectionate, reiterated, praiſes of her ſon, had combined to awaken all the exquiſite, though dormant, ſenſibilities of my nature; and, however romantic it might

might appear to others, and did appear even to myſelf, I felt, that I loved an ideal object (for ſuch was Auguſtus Harley to me) with a tender and fervent exceſs; an exceſs, perhaps, involving all my future uſefulneſs and welfare. 'People, in general,' ſays Rouſſeau, 'do not ſufficiently conſider the influence which the firſt attachments, between man and woman, have over the remainder of their lives; they do not perceive, that an impreſſion ſo ſtrong, and ſo lively, as that of love, is productive of a long chain of effects, which paſs unobſerved in a courſe of years, yet, nevertheleſs, continue to operate till the day of their deaths.' It was in vain I attempted to combat this illuſion; my reaſon was but an auxiliary to my paſſion, it perſuaded me, that I was only doing juſtice to high and uncommon worth; imagination lent her aid, and an importunate ſenſibility, panting after good unalloyed, completed the ſeduction.

From this period Mrs. Harley was more guarded in her conduct; ſhe carefully avoided the mention of her ſon.—

Under

Under pretence of having an alteration made in the frame, ſhe removed his picture from the library; but the conſtraint ſhe put upon herſelf was too evident and painful; we no longer ſought, with equal ardour, an interchange of ſentiment, reſerve took place of the tender confidence of friendſhip; a thouſand times, while I gazed upon her dear averted countenance, I yearned to throw myſelf upon her boſom, to weep, to unfold to her the inmoſt receſſes of my mind—that ingenuous mind, which languiſhed for communication, and preyed upon itſelf! Dear and cruel friend, why did you transfix my heart with the barbed and envenomed arrow, and then refuſe to adminiſter the only healing balſam?

My viſits to Mrs. Harley became leſs frequent; I ſhut myſelf up whole days in my apartment, at Morton Park, or wandered through its now leafleſs groves, abſorbed in meditation—foſtering the ſickly ſenſibility of my ſoul, and nurſing wild, improbable, chimerical, viſions of felicity, that, touched by the ſober wand

wand of truth, would have 'melted into thin air.' 'The more deſires I have (obſerves an acute, and profound French Philoſopher*) the leſs ardent they are. The torrents that divide themſelves into many branches, are the leaſt dangerous in their courſe. A ſtrong paſſion is a ſolitary paſſion, that concentrates all our deſires within one point.'

## CHAP. XIX.

I HAD not ſeen my friend for many days, when, on a dark and ſtormy night, in the month of January, between nine and ten o'clock, the family at Morton Park were alarmed, by a loud and violent knocking at the hall door.

On opening it, a ſervant appeared—and a chaiſe, the porter having unbolted the great gates, drew up to the door. The man delivered a note addreſſed to Miſs Courtney. I was unacquainted with the hand writing,

* Helvetius.

writing, and unfolded it with trepidation. It contained but a few lines, written in a female character, and ſigned with the name of a lady, who reſided about twelve miles from Morton Park, at whoſe houſe Mrs. Harley ſometimes made a viſit of a few days. It ſtated—

'That my friend was ſeized at the manſion of this lady with an apoplectic fit, from which ſhe had been reſtored, after ſome hours of inſenſibility: that the phyſicians were apprehenſive of a relapſe, and that Mrs. Harley had expreſſed a deſire of ſeeing Miſs Courtney—A carriage and ſervants were ſent for her conveyance.'

Mr. Morton was from home, his lady made no offer of any of her own domeſtics to accompany me. Montague, who had been at the Park for ſome days paſt, ſolicited permiſſion to be my eſcort. I heſitated a moment, and would willingly have declined this propoſal, but he repeated and enforced it with a vehemence, that, in the preſent hurried ſtate of my mind, I had not ſpirits to oppoſe.

Shocked,

Shocked, alarmed, diſtreſſed, I wrapped a ſhawl round me, and ſprang into the chaiſe. Montague ſtepped in after me, and ſeated himſelf by my ſide; the horſes galloped, or rather flew down the avenue, that led to the high road.

We travelled with great ſwiftneſs, and in uninterrupted ſilence, for ſome miles: the darkneſs was ſo thick and profound, that I could not diſcover the road we took, and I began to feel very impatient to arrive at the place of our deſtination. I queſtioned my companion reſpecting his knowledge of our ſituation, and expreſſed an apprehenſion, that we might poſſibly have miſſed the way. He made no reply to my interrogation, but, ſtarting as if from a reverie, ſeized my hand, while his own trembled with a viſible agitation, and began once more to urge a ſuit, which I had hoped the ſteadineſs and conſiſtency of my conduct had induced him entirely to relinquiſh.

"Is this a time, Mr. Montague, for "an addreſs of this nature—do you be- "lieve, that my favour is to be gained by "theſe

"these proofs of inconsideration? Have "some respect for the claims of huma- "nity and friendship, and, in seeking my "affection, do not forfeit my esteem."

He was about to reply, and I could perceive by the few words which he uttered, and by the tone of his voice, that he struggled, in vain, to rein in his quick and irascible spirit; when, in turning a sharp angle of the road, the horses took fright at some object, indistinctly seen, and ran precipitately down a steep hill, with a velocity that threatened immediate destruction.

My companion, forcing open the door, seemed inclined to leap from the carriage, but hesitated, as if unwilling to desert me in so imminent a danger; I exhorted him to think only of providing for his own safety, and, letting down the glasses on the side on which I sat, I resigned myself to my fate. In springing from the chaise, by some means, Montague entangled his coat in the step—he fell, without clearing it, and I felt, with a horror that congealed my blood, the wheel go

over him. In a few minutes, I perceived a traveller, at the riſque of his own life, endeavouring to ſtop the horſes—the pole of the chaiſe ſtriking him with great force, he was obliged to relinquiſh his humane efforts—but this impediment occaſioning the reſtive animals to turn out of the road, they ran furiouſly up a bank, and overſet the carriage. I felt it going, and ſitting, with my arms folded, cloſe in the lower corner, fell with it, without attempting to ſtruggle, by which means I eſcaped unhurt.

The ſtranger, once more, came to our aſſiſtance, and, the mettle of the horſes being now pretty well exhauſted, my deliverer was enabled to cut the traces, and then haſtened to extricate me from my perilous ſituation. It was ſome time before I recovered myſelf ſufficiently to thank him for his humanity, and to aſſure him, that I had received no other injury than from my fears. I then mentioned to him, my apprehenſions for the fate of my fellow traveller, entreating that he would return with me in ſearch of him.

With

With this requeſt he immediately complied, leaving the horſes in the care of the ſervants, neither of which had received any material hurt.

We ſoon diſcovered the unfortunate Montague, lying in the road, in a melancholy ſituation: the wheel had gone over one of his legs, the bone of which was broken and ſplintered in a terrible manner, and, having fainted from the pain, we were at firſt apprehenſive that he was already dead. Turning from this ſhocking ſpectacle, a faint ſickneſs overſpread my heart, the ſtranger ſupported me in his arms, while a violent burſt of tears preſerved me from ſwooning. My companion examining the body, perceived ſigns of life, and, by our united efforts, ſenſe and recollection were ſoon reſtored.

I remained with Montague while the ſtranger returned to the carriage, to enquire what damages it had received, and whether it was in a condition to proceed to the next village, which, the poſtilion informed him, was near two miles from the ſpot where the accident had happened,

and we were, yet, five miles from the place whither we were going. The axle-tree and one of the hind wheels, upon examination, were found broken, the traces had been cut in pieces, and the horſes, had the chaiſe been in a better condition, were ſo unmanageable, in conſequence of their late fright, that it would have been dangerous to have attempted putting them again into harneſs.

With this intelligence our kind friend came back to us—We held a ſhort conſultation, on the means moſt proper to be adopted, and, at length it was determined, that, after placing Montague in the carriage, where he would be ſheltered from the inclemency of the elements, and leaving him in the charge of the ſervants, the traveller and myſelf ſhould walk onward to the village, and ſend a chaiſe, or litter, for the conveyance of our unfortunate companion.

To this propoſal Montague aſſented, at the ſame time, declaring it to be his intention, to proceed directly acroſs the country, to the houſe of his father, which could

could not, he conjectured, be at any great diſtance, and where he ſhould be aſſured of meeting with greater attention, and more ſkilful aſſiſtance, than at a petty inn, in a paltry village. Having thus adjuſted our plan, and, with the help of the ſervants, carefully placed Montague in the chaiſe, we proceeded towards the village.

## CHAP. XX.

THE night was tempeſtuous, and, though the moon was now riſing, her light was every moment obſcured by dark clouds, diſcharging frequent and heavy ſhowers of rain, accompanied by furious guſts of wind. After walking near a mile we entered upon a wide heath, which afforded no ſhelter from the weather. I perceived my companion's ſteps began to grow feeble, and his voice faint. The moon ſuddenly emerging from a

thick cloud, I obſerved his countenance, and methought his features ſeemed familiar to me; but they were overſpread by a palid and death-like hue. He ſtopped ſuddenly ——

"I am very ill," ſaid he, in a tone of voice that penetrated into my ſoul, "and "can proceed no further."

He ſunk upon the turf. Seating myſelf beſide him, while his head fell on my ſhoulder, I threw around him my ſupporting arms. His temples were bedewed with a cold ſweat, and he appeared to be in expiring agonies. A violent ſickneſs ſucceeded, followed by an hemorrhage.

"Gracious God!" I exclaimed, "you "have broken a blood veſſel!"

"I fear ſo," he replied. "I have felt "ſtrangely diſordered ſince the blow I "received from the pole of the carriage; "but, till this moment, I have not been "at leiſure to attend to my ſenſations."

"Do not talk," cried I, wildly; "do "not exhauſt yourſelf."

Again

Again the clouds gathered; an impetuous guſt of wind ſwept over the heath, and the rain fell in torrents. Unconſcious what I did, I claſped the ſtranger to my throbbing boſom,—the coldneſs of death ſeemed upon him—I wrapped my ſhawl around him, vainly attempting to ſcreen him from the piercing blaſt. He ſpake not; my terrified imagination already repreſented him as a lifeleſs corpſe; I ſat motionleſs for ſome minutes, in the torpor of deſpair.

From this horrible ſituation, I was, at length, rouſed, by the ſound of a diſtant team: breathleſs, I liſtened for a few moments; I again diſtinctly heard it wafted upon the wind; when, gently reclining my charge on the graſs, I ſtarted from the ground, and ran ſwiftly towards the highway. The ſound approached, and the clouds once more breaking, and diſcovering a watery moon-light gleam, I perceived, with joy, a waggon loaded with hay. I bounded over a part of the turf that ſtill ſeparated me from the road, and accoſting the driver, explained to him, in

a few words, as much of my ſituation as was neceſſary; and, entreating his aſſiſtance, allured him by the hope of a reward.

We returned together to my patient: he raiſed his head on my approach, and attempted to ſpeak; but, enjoining him ſilence, he took my hand, and, by a gentle preſſure, expreſſed his ſenſe of my cares more eloquently than by words. I aſſiſted the countryman in ſupporting him to the road. We prepared for him, in the waggon, a ſoft bed of hay, upon which we placed him; and, reſting his head on my lap, we proceeded gently to the neareſt village. On our arrival at an indifferent inn, I ordered a bed to be immediately prepared for him, and ſent a man and horſe expreſs, to the next town, for medical aſſiſtance: at the ſame time, relating in brief the accidents of the night, I diſpatched a carriage for the relief of Montague, who was conveyed, according to his wiſhes, to the houſe of his father.

Notwith-

Notwithſtanding all my precautions, the moving brought on a relapſe of the alarming ſymptoms; the diſcharge of blood returned with aggravated violence, and, when the phyſician arrived, there appeared in the unfortunate ſufferer but little ſigns of life; but by the application of ſtyptics and cordials he once more began to revive; and, about five in the morning, I was prevailed on, by the joint efforts of the landlady and the humane Dr. ———, to reſign my ſeat at the bed's head to a careful ſervant, and to recruit my exhauſted ſtrength by a few hours' repoſe.

The vivid impreſſions, which had ſo rapidly ſucceeded each other in my mind, for ſome time kept me waking, in a ſtate of feveriſh agitation; but my harraſſed ſpirits were at length relieved by wearied nature's kind reſtorer, and I ſlept for four hours profoundly.

On waking, my firſt enquiry was after my companion, in whoſe fate I felt an unuſual degree of intereſt; and I heard, with pleaſure, that the hemorrhage had not re-

turned; that he had reſted with apparent tranquillity, and appeared revived. I dreſſed myſelf haſtily, and paſſed into his apartment: he faintly ſmiled on perceiving my approach, and gave me his hand. —The phyſician had ordered him to be kept quiet, and I would not ſuffer him to ſpeak; but, contemplating more attentively his countenance, which had the night before ſtruck me with a confuſed recollection—what were my emotions, on tracing the beloved features of Auguſtus Harley! His reſemblance, not only to the portrait, but to his mother, could not, as I thought, be miſtaken. A univerſal trembling ſeized me—I haſtened out of the apartment with tottering ſteps, and ſhutting myſelf into my chamber, a tide of melancholy emotions guſhed upon my heart. I wept, without knowing wherefore, tears half delicious, half agonizing! Quickly coming to myſelf, I returned to the chamber of my patient, (now more tenderly endeared) which, officiating as a nurſe for five days, I never

quitted,

quitted, except to take neceſſary reſt and refreſhment.

I had written to Mr. Morton a minute account of all that happened, merely ſuppreſſing the name of my deliverer: to this letter I received no reply; but had the pleaſure of hearing, on the return of my meſſenger (who was commiſſioned to make enquiries), that Mrs. Harley had ſuffered no return of her diſorder, and was daily acquiring health and ſtrength. —I feared, yet, to acquaint her with the ſituation of her ſon; not only on the account of her own late critical ſituation, but, alſo, leſt any ſudden agitation of ſpirits from the arrival of his mother, might, in his preſent weak ſtate, be fatal to Auguſtus.

I now redoubled for him my cares and attentions: he grew hourly better; and, when permitted to converſe, expreſſed in lively terms his grateful ſenſe of my kindneſs. Ah! why did I miſconſtrue theſe emotions, ſo natural in ſuch circumſtances—why did I flatter my heart with

the belief of a ſympathy which did not, could not, exiſt!

## CHAP. XXI.

AS my patient began to acquire ſtrength, I demanded of him his name and family, that I might inform his friends of his ſituation. On his anſwering "Harley," I enquired, ſmiling—

If he remembered hearing his mother ſpeak of a little *Protegé*, Emma Courtney, whom ſhe favoured with her partial friendſhip?

"Oh, yes!"—and his curioſity had been ſtrongly awakened to procure a ſight of this lady.

"Behold her, then, in your nurſe!"

"Is it poſſible!" he exclaimed, taking my hand, and preſſing it with his lips—"My ſiſter!—my friend!—how ſhall I "ever pay the debt I owe you?"

"We

"We will ſettle that matter another "time; but it is now become proper that I "ſhould inform your excellent mother of "what has happened, which I have hitherto "delayed, leſt ſurpriſe ſhould be preju-"dicial to you, and retard your recovery."

I then recounted to him the particulars of the late occurrences, of which he had before but a confuſed notion; adding my ſurpriſe, that I had neither ſeen, nor heard, any thing from Mr. Morton.

He informed me, in his turn, that, having received an expreſs, informing him of his mother's alarming ſituation, he immediately quitted the ſeat of his friend, where he was on a viſit, to haſten to her; that, for this purpoſe, riding late, he by ſome means bewildered himſelf through the darkneſs of the evening, by which miſtake he encountered our chaiſe, and he hoped was, in ſome meaſure, notwithſtanding the accidents which enſued, acceſſary to my preſervation.

I quitted him to write to my friend, whom I, at length, judged it neceſſary to acquaint with his ſituation. On the receipt

ceipt of my letter, ſhe flew to us on the wings of maternal tenderneſs—folded her beloved Auguſtus, and myſelf, alternately to her affectionate boſom, calling us "her children—her darling children!——I was her guardian angel—*the preſerver of her ſon!*—and *he* only could repay my goodneſs!" I ventured to raiſe my eyes to him—they met his—mine were humid with tears of tenderneſs: a cloud paſſed over his brow—he entreated his mother to reſtrain her tranſports—he was yet too enfeebled to bear theſe emotions. She recollected herſelf in an inſtant; and, after again embracing him, leaning on my arm, walked out into the air, to relieve the tumultuous ſenſations that preſſed upon her heart.

Once more ſhe made me recite, minutely, the late events—ſtrained me in her arms, repeatedly calling me—

"Her beloved daughter—the meritorious child of her affections—the preſerver of her Auguſtus!"

Every word ſhe uttered ſunk deep into my ſoul, that greedily abſorbed the delicious

cious poiſon, prepared for me by the cruel hand of more than maternal fondneſs.

I mentioned to her my having written to Mr. Morton, and my aſtoniſhment at his ſilence.

He had not yet returned, ſhe informed me, to Morton Park; and intimated, that ſome malicious ſtories, reſpecting my ſudden diſappearance, had been circulated by Mrs. Morton through the neighbourhood. She had herſelf been under extreme ſolicitude on my account. It was generally believed, from the turn Mrs. Morton's malice had given to the affair, that I had eloped with Mr. Montague:—the accident which had befallen him had been rumoured; but the circumſtances, and the occaſion of it, had been variouſly related. Confiding in my principles, ſhe had waited with anxiety for the elucidation of theſe myſterious accounts; lamenting herſelf as the innocent occaſion of them, yet aſſured they would, eventually, prove to my honour. She commended the magnanimity, which her partial

partial friendſhip imputed to my behaviour, with all the enthuſiaſm of affection, and execrated the baſeneſs of Mrs. Morton, who, having received my letter, muſt have been acquainted with the real truth.

Her narration gave me many complicated, and painful, ſenſations; but the good opinion of the world, however deſirable it may be, as connected with our utility, has ever been with me but a ſecondary conſideration. Confiding in the rectitude of my own conduct, I compoſed my ſpirits; depending on that rectitude, and time, for removing the malignant aſperſions which at preſent clouded my fame. The tale of ſlander, the baſis of which is falſehood, will quietly wear away; and ſhould it not—how unfounded, frequently, are the cenſures of the world—how confuſed its judgments! I entreated my friend to ſay nothing, at preſent, to her ſon on this ſubject; it was yet of importance that his mind ſhould be kept ſtill and tranquil.

We rejoined Auguſtus at the dinner hour, and ſpent the day together in harmony

mony and friendſhip. The phyſician calling in the evening, Mrs. Harley conſulted him, whether it would be ſafe to remove her ſon, as ſhe was impatient to have him under her own roof. To this the doctor made no objection, provided he was conveyed in an eaſy carriage, and by ſhort ſtages. On Mrs. Harley's thanking him for his polite and humane attention to his patient, ſmilingly pointing to me, he replied—"Her thanks were miſplaced." His look was arch and ſignificant; it called a glow into my cheeks. I ventured, once more, to ſteal a glance at Auguſtus: his features were again overſpread with a more than uſual ſerioufneſs, while his eyes ſeemed deſignedly averted. Mrs. Harley ſighed, and, abruptly changing the ſubject, aſked the phyſician an indifferent queſtion, who ſoon after took his leave.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXII.

IN a few days we returned to the peaceful manſion of my maternal friend. Auguſtus ſeemed revived by the little journey, while every hour brought with it an increaſe of health and ſpirits. Mrs. Harley would not ſuffer me to ſpeak of going to Morton Park in the abſence of its maſter; neither could Auguſtus ſpare his kind nurſe:—"I muſt ſtay," he added, and methought his accents were ſoftened, "and complete my charitable "purpoſe." My appearance again in the village, the reſpectability, and the teſtimony, of my friends, cleared my fame; and it was only at Morton Park, that any injurious ſuſpicions were affected to be entertained.

The hours flew on downy pinions:—my new *brother*, for ſo he would call himſelf, endeavoured to teſtify his gratitude, by encouraging and aſſiſting me in the purſuit of learning and ſcience: he gave

gave us lectures on aſtronomy and philoſophy—

"While truths divine came mended from his tongue."

I applied myſelf to the languages, and, aided by my preceptor, attained a general knowledge of the principles, and philoſophy, of criticiſm and grammar, and of the rules of compoſition. Every day brought with it the acquiſition of ſome new truth; and our intervals from ſtudy were employed in muſic, in drawing, in converſation, in reading the *belles lettres* —in—

"The feaſt of reaſon, and the flow of ſouls."

The ſpring was advancing:—we now made little excurſions, either on horſeback, in a chaiſe, or in a boat on the river, through the adjacent country. The fraternal relation, which Auguſtus had aſſumed, baniſhed reſtraint, and aſſiſted me in deceiving myſelf. I drank in large and intoxicating draughts of a delicious poiſon, that had circulated through every vein

vein to my heart, before I was aware of its progreſs. At length, part of a converſation, which I accidentally overheard between Mrs. Harley and her ſon, recalled me to a temporary recollection.

I was ſeeking them in the garden, towards the duſk of the evening, and a filbert hedge ſeparated us. I heard the voice of my friend, as ſpeaking earneſtly, and I unconſciouſly ſtopped.

"It would be a comfort to my declin-
"ing years to ſee you the huſband of a
"woman of virtue and ſenſibility: do-
"meſtic affections meliorate the heart;
"no one ought to live wholly to him-
"ſelf."

"Certainly not, neither does any one;
"but, in the preſent ſtate of ſociety, there
"are many difficulties and anxieties at-
"tending theſe connections: they are a
"lottery, and the prizes are few. I
"think, perhaps, nearly with you, but
"my ſituation is, *in many reſpects, a pecu-*
"*liar one*,"—and he ſighed deeply:——
"Need I enumerate theſe peculiarities to
"you? Neither do I pretend to have
"lived

"lived ſo long in the world without im-
"bibing many of its prejudices, and
"catching the contagion of its habits."

"They are unworthy of you."

"Perhaps ſo—but we will, if you
"pleaſe, change the ſubject; this to me
"is not a pleaſant one. What is become
"of my pupil? It is likely to be a clear
"night; let us go in, and prepare for
"ſome aſtronomical obſervations."

My heart reproved me for liſtening, I crept back to my chamber — ſhed one tear—heaved a convulſive, ſtruggling, ſigh—breathed on my handkerchief, applied it to my eyes, and joined my friends in the library.

Four months had paſſed rapidly—"the ſpot of azure in the cloudy ſky"—of my deſtiny. Mr. Morton, I was informed, had returned to the Park, and Auguſtus, whoſe health was now thoroughly reſtored, talked of quitting the country. I adviſed with my friends, who agreed with me, that it was now become proper for me to viſit my uncle, and, explaining to him the late events, juſtify my conduct.

Mrs.

Mrs. Harley and her ſon offered to accompany me; but this, for many reaſons, I declined; taking my leave of them with a heavy heart, and promiſing, if I were not kindly received, an immediate return.

## CHAP. XXIII.

ON my arrival at Mr. Morton's, the porter informed me, he was ordered, by his lady, to deny my entrance. My ſwelling heart!—a ſentiment of indignation diſtended it almoſt to ſuffocation.—At this moment, Ann tripped lightly through the court-yard, and, ſeeing me, ran to embrace me. I returned her careſſes with warmth.

"Ah!" ſaid ſhe, "you are not, you "cannot be, guilty. I have been long-"ing to ſee you, and to hear all that has "happened, but it was not permitted "me." She added, in a whiſper, "I

"cannot

"cannot love my mother, for ſhe tor-
"ments and reſtrains me—my deſire of
"liberty is ſtronger than my duty—but
"I ſhall one day be able to outwit her."

"Will not your father, my love, allow
"me to ſpeak to him? I have a right to
"be heard, and I demand his attention."

"He is in his dreſſing-room," ſaid Ann, "I will ſlide ſoftly, to him, and "tell him you are here."

Away ſhe flew, and one of the foot-men preſently returned, to conduct me to his maſter. I found him alone, he received me with a grave and ſevere aſ-pect. I related to him, circumſtantially, the occurrences which had taken place during his abſence. My words, my voice, my manner, were emphatic—ani-mated with the energy of truth—they ex-torted, they commanded, they, irreſiſti-bly, compelled aſſent. His features ſoftened, his eyes gliſtened, he held out his hand, he was about to ſpeak—he heſitated a moment, and ſighed. At this inſtant, Mrs. Morton burſt into the room, with the aſpect of a fury—her bloated

countenance

countenance yet more ſwelled and hideous—I ſhrunk back involuntarily—ſhe poured forth a torrent of abuſe and invective. A momentary recollection reaſſured me—waiting till ſhe had exhauſted her breath, I turned from her, and to her huſband, with calm dignity—

"I thank you, Sir, for all the kindneſs "I have received from you—I am con- "vinced you do me juſtice—*for this I "do not thank you*, it was a duty to which "I had a claim, and which you owed, "not only to me, but, to yourſelf. My "longer continuance in this houſe, I feel, "would be improper. For the preſent, "I return to Mrs. Harley's, where I "ſhall reſpectfully receive, and maturely "weigh, any counſels with which you "may in future think proper to favour "me."

Mr. Morton bowed his head; poor man! his mild ſpirit was overborne, he dared not aſſert the dictates of his own reaſon. I hurried out of the apartment, and haſtily embracing Ann, who awaited me in the hall, charging myſelf with a hundred

hundred kiſſes for Mrs. Harley, I took the way to the hoſpitable manſion of my friend.

I had proceeded about half a mile, when I beheld Auguſtus, advancing towards me; he obſerved my tremulous emotions, and pallid countenance; he took my hand, holding it with a gentle preſſure, and, throwing his other arm round me, ſupported my faultering ſteps. His voice was the voice of kindneſs—his words ſpake aſſurance, and breathed hope—*fallacious hope!*—My heart melted within me—my tremor encreaſed—I diſſolved into tears.

"A deſerted outcaſt from ſociety—a deſolate orphan—what was to become of me—to whom could I fly?"

"Unjuſt girl! have I then forfeited "all your confidence—have you not a "mother and a friend, who love you—" he ſtopped—pauſed—and added "with "maternal, with *fraternal*, tenderneſs? "to whom would you go?—remain "with us, your ſociety will cheer my "mother's declining years"—again he he-

ſitated—" I am about to return to town, " aſſure me, that you will continue with " Mrs. Harley—it will ſoften the pain " of ſeparation."

I ſtruggled for more fortitude—hinted at the narrowneſs of my fortune—at my wiſh to exert my talents in ſome way, that ſhould procure me a leſs dependent ſituation—ſpoke of my active ſpirit—of my abhorrence of a life of indolence and vacuity.

He inſiſted on my waving theſe ſubjects for the preſent. " There would be time enough, in future, for their conſideration. In the mean while, I might go on improving myſelf, and whether preſent, or abſent, might depend upon him, for every aſſiſtance in his power."

His ſoothing kindneſs, aided by the affectionate attentions of my friend, gradually, lulled my mind into tranquillity. My boſom was agitated, only, by a ſlight and ſweet emotion—like the gentle undulations of the ocean, when the winds, that ſwept over its ruffled ſurface, are huſhed into repoſe.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXIV.

ANOTHER month paſſed away—every hour, I imbibed, in large draughts, the deceitful poiſon of hope. A few days before that appointed for the departure of Auguſtus, I received a viſit from Mr. Montague, of whoſe ſituation, during his confinement, I had made many enquiries, and it was with unaffected pleaſure that I beheld him perfectly reſtored to health. I introduced him to my friends, who congratulated him upon his recovery, and treated him with that polite and cordial hoſpitality which characterized them. He was on his way to Morton Park, and was particular in his enquiries reſpecting the late conduct of the lady of the manſion, of which he had heard ſome confuſed reports. I could not conceal from him our final ſeparation, but, aware of his inflammable temper, I endeavoured to ſoften my recital as far as was conſiſtent with truth

and juſtice. It was with difficulty, that our united perſuaſions induced him to reſtrain his fiery ſpirit, which broke out into menaces and execrations. I repreſented to him—

"That every thing had been already explained; that the affair had now ſubſided; that a reconciliation was neither probable nor deſirable; that any interference, on his part, would only tend to mutual exaſperation, from which I muſt eventually be the ſufferer."

I extorted from him a promiſe—that, as he was neceſſitated to meet Mr. Morton on buſineſs, he would make no allusion to the paſt—I ſhould be mortified, (I added) by having it ſuppoſed, that I ſtood in need of a *champion*.—Mr. Morton had no doubts of the rectitude of my conduct, and it would be barbarous to involve him in a perpetual domeſtic warfare.

Mr. Montague, at the requeſt of Auguſtus, ſpent that day, and the next, with us. I thought, I perceived, that he regarded Mr. Harley with a ſcrutinizing eye,

eye, and obſerved my reſpect for, and attention to, him, with jealous apprehenſion. Before his departure, he requeſted half an hour's converſation with me alone, with which requeſt I immediately complied, and withdrew with him into an adjoining apartment. He informed me—

"That he was going to London to purſue his medical ſtudies—that, on his return, his father had propoſed to eſtabliſh him in his profeſſion—that his proſpects were very favourable, and that he ſhould eſteem himſelf completely happy, if he might, yet, hope to ſoften my heart in his favour, and to place me in a more aſſured and tranquil ſituation."

I breathed a heavy ſigh, and ſunk into a melancholy reverie.

"Speak to me, Emma," ſaid he, with impatience, "and relieve the anxiety I "ſuffer."

"Alas! What can I ſay?"

"Say, that you will try to love me, "that you will reward my faith and per-"ſeverance."

"Would to God, I could"—I hesitated—my eyes filled with tears—"Go "to London," resumed I; "a thousand "new objects will there quickly obliterate from your remembrance a romantic and ill-fated attachment, to which "retirement, and the want of other impression, has given birth, and which "owes its strength merely to opposition."

"As that opposition," retorted he, "is the offspring of pride and insensibility—"

I looked at him with a mournful air—"Do not reproach me, Montague, my "situation is far more pitiable than yours. "*I am, indeed, unhappy*,"—added I, after a pause; "I, like you, am the victim of a "raised, of, I fear, a distempered imagination."

He eagerly entreated me to explain myself.

"I will not attempt to deceive you—"I should accuse myself, were I to preserve any sentiment, however delicate "its nature, that might tend to remove "your present illusion. It is, I confess, with

"with extreme reluctance—with real "pain"—I trembled—my voice faultered, and I felt my colour vary—"that "I conſtrain myſelf to acknowledge a "hopeleſs, an extravagant"—I ſtopped, unable to proceed.

Fire flaſhed from his eyes, he ſtarted from his ſeat, and took two or three haſty ſtrides acroſs the room.

"I underſtand you, but too well—"Auguſtus Harley ſhall diſpute with me "a prize"—

"Stop, Sir, be not unjuſt--make "not an ungenerous return to the "confidence I have repoſed in you. "Reſpect the violence which, on your "account, I have done to my own feel-"ings. I own, that I have not been "able to defend my heart againſt the ac-"compliſhments and high qualities of "Mr. Harley—I reſpected his virtues "and attainments, and, by a too eaſy "tranſition—at length—*loved his perſon.* "But my tenderneſs is a ſecret to all the "world but yourſelf—It has not met "with"—a burning bluſh ſuffuſed my

cheek—"It has little hope of meeting,
"a return. To your *honor* I have con-
"fided this cheriſhed *ſecret*—dare you
"betray my confidence? I know, you
"dare not!"

He ſeemed affected—his mind appeared torn by a variety of conflicting emotions, that ſtruggled for victory—he walked towards me, and again to the door, ſeveral times. I approached him—I gave him my hand——

"Adieu, Montague," ſaid I, in a ſoftened accent—"Be aſſured of my ſym-
"pathy—of my eſteem—of my beſt
"wiſhes! When you can meet me with
"calmneſs, I ſhall rejoice to ſee you—
"*as a friend.* Amidſt ſome exceſſes, I
"perceive the ſeeds of real worth in your
"character, cultivate them, they may
"yield a noble harveſt. I ſhall not be
"forgetful of the diſtinction you have
"ſhewn me, *when almoſt a deſerted orphan*
"—Once again—farewel, my friend, and
"—may God bleſs you!"

I precipitately withdrew my hand from his, and ruſhed out of the room. I retired

to

to my chamber, and it was ſome hours before my ſpirits became ſufficiently compoſed to allow me to rejoin my friends. On meeting them, Mrs. Harley mentioned, with ſome ſurprize, the abrupt departure of Montague, who had quitted the houſe, without taking leave of its owners, by whom he had been ſo politely received.

"He is a fine young man" added ſhe, "but appears to be very eccentric."

Auguſtus was ſilent, but fixed his penetrating eyes on my face, with an expreſſion that covered me with confuſion.

## CHAP. XXV.

THE day fixed for the departure of Mr. Harley, for London, now drew near—I had anticipated this period with the moſt cruel inquietude. I was going to loſe, perhaps for ever, my pre-

ceptor, my friend! He, from whom my mind had acquired knowledge, and in whoſe preſence my heart had reſted ſatisfied. I had hitherto ſcarcely formed a wiſh beyond that of daily beholding, and liſtening to him—I was now to gaze on that beloved countenance, to liſten to thoſe ſoothing accents, no longer. He was about to mix in the gay world—to loſe in the hurry of buſineſs, or of pleaſure, the remembrance of thoſe tender, rational, tranquil, moments, ſacred to virtue and friendſhip, that had left an indelible impreſſion on my heart. Could I, indeed, flatter myſelf, that the idea of the timid, affectionate, Emma, would ever recur to his mind in the tumultuous ſcenes of the crouded metropolis, it would doubtleſs quickly be effaced, and loſt in the multiplicity of engagements and avocations. How ſhould I, buried in ſolitude and ſilence, recall it to his recollection, how contrive to mingle it with his thoughts, and entangle it with his aſſociations? Ah! did he but know my tenderneſs—*the deſire of being beloved*, of inſpiring

ſpiring ſympathy, is congenial to the human heart—why ſhould I heſitate to inform him of my affection—why do I bluſh and tremble at the mere idea? It is a falſe ſhame! It is a pernicious ſyſtem of morals, which teaches us that hypocriſy can be virtue! He is well acquainted with the purity, and with the ſincerity, of my heart—he will at leaſt regard me with eſteem and tender pity—and how often has 'pity melted the ſoul to love!' The experiment is, ſurely, innocent, and little hazardous. What have I to apprehend? Can I diſtruſt, for a moment, thoſe principles of rectitude, of honour, of goodneſs, which gave birth to my affection? Have I not witneſſed his humanity, have I not experienced his delicacy, in a thouſand inſtances? Though he ſhould be obliged to wound, he is incapable of inſulting, the heart that loves him; and that, loving him, believed, alas! for a long time, *that it loved only virtue!*

The morning of our ſeparation, at laſt, arrived. My friend, too much indiſpoſed

to attend the breakfaſt table, took leave of her ſon in her own apartment. I awaited him, in the library, with a beating heart, and, on his departure, put into his hands a paper.—

"Read it not," ſaid I, in a low and almoſt inarticulate tone of voice, "till ar-"rived at the end of your journey; or, "at leaſt, till you are ten miles from "hence."

He received it in ſilence; but it was a ſilence more expreſſive than words.

"Suffer me," it ſaid, "for a few moments, to ſolicit your candour and attention. You are the only man in the world, to whom I could venture to confide ſentiments, that to many would be inconceivable; and by thoſe, who are unacquainted with the human mind, and the variety of circumſtances by which characters are variouſly impreſſed and formed—who are accuſtomed to conſider mankind in maſſes—who have been uſed to bend implicitly, to cuſtom and preſcription—the deviation of a ſolitary individual from *rules* ſanctioned by uſage, by prejudice, by

by expediency, would be regarded as romantic. I frankly avow, while my cheeks glow with the bluſhes of *modeſty*, not of ſhame, that your virtues and accompliſhments have excited in my boſom an affection, as pure as the motives which gave it birth, and as animated as it is pure.—This ingenuous avowal may perhaps affect, but will ſcarcely (I ſuſpect) ſurpriſe, you; for, incapable of diſſimulation, the emotions of my mind are ever but too apparent in my expreſſions, and in my conduct, to deceive a leſs penetrating eye than yours—neither have I been ſolicitous to diſguiſe them.

"It has been obſerved, that, 'the ſtrength of an affection is generally in the ſame proportion, as the character of the ſpecies, in the object beloved, is loſt in that of the individual,'* and, that individuality of character is the only faſtener of the affections. It is certain, however ſingular it may appear, that many months before we became perſonally acquainted,

* Woolſtonecraft's Rights of Woman.

the

the report of your worth and high qualities had generated in my mind, an eſteem and reverence, which has gradually ripened into a tenderneſs, that has, at length, mixed itſelf with all my aſſociations, and is become interwoven with every fibre of my heart.

"I have reflected, again and again, on the imprudence of cheriſhing an attachment, which a variety of circumſtances combine to render ſo unpromiſing, and ———What ſhall I ſay?——So peculiar is the conſtitution of my mind, that thoſe very circumſtances have had a tendency directly oppoſite to what might reaſonably have been expected; and have only ſerved to render the ſentiment, I have delighted to foſter, more affecting and intereſting. —Yes! I am aware of the tenure upon which you retain your fortunes—of the cruel and unnatural conditions impoſed on you by the capricious teſtator: neither can I require a ſacrifice which I am unable to recompence. But while theſe melancholy convictions deprive me of hope,

hope, they encourage me, by proving the diſintereſtedneſs of my attachment, to relieve my heart by communication.—Mine is a whimſical pride, which dreads nothing ſo much as the imputation of ſordid, or ſiniſter motives. Remember, then—ſhould we never meet again—if in future periods you ſhould find, that the friendſhip of the world is—'a ſhade that follows wealth and fame;'—if, where you have conferred obligation, you are repaid with ingratitude—where you have placed confidence, with treachery—and where you have a claim to zeal, with coldneſs! Remember, *that you have once been beloved, for yourſelf alone*, by one, who, in contributing to the comfort of your life, would have found the happineſs of her own.

"Is it poſſible that a mind like yours, neither hardened by proſperity, nor debaſed by faſhionable levity—which vice has not corrupted, nor ignorance brutalized—can be wholly inſenſible to the balmy ſweetneſs, which natural, unſophiſticated,

ticated, affections, ſhed through the human heart?

'Shall thoſe by heaven's own influence join'd,
'By feeling, ſympathy, and mind,
'The ſacred voice of truth deny,
'And mock the mandate of the ſky?'

"But I check my pen:—I am no longer—

'The hope-flush'd enterer on the ſtage of life.'

"The dreams of youth, chaced by premature reflection, have given place to ſoberer, to ſadder, concluſions; and while I acknowledge, that it would be inexpreſſibly ſoothing to me to believe, that, in happier circumſtances, my artleſs affection might have awakened in your mind a ſympathetic tenderneſs:—this is the extent of my hopes!——I recollect you once told me 'It was our duty to make our reaſon conquer the ſenſibility of our heart.' Yet, why? Is, then, apathy the perfection of our nature—and is not that nature refined and harmonized

by

by the gentle and ſocial affections? The Being who gave to the mind its reaſon, gave alſo to the heart its ſenſibility.

"I make no apologies for, becauſe I feel no conſciouſneſs of, weakneſs. An attachment ſanctioned by nature, reaſon, and virtue, ennobles the mind capable of conceiving and cheriſhing it: of ſuch an attachment a corrupt heart is utterly incapable.

"You may tell me, perhaps, 'that the portrait on which my fancy has dwelt enamoured, owes all its graces, its glowing colouring—like the ideal beauty of the ancient artiſts—to the imagination capable of ſketching the dangerous picture.' —Allowing this, for a moment, *the ſentiments it inſpires are not the leſs genuine*; and without ſome degree of illuſion, and enthuſiaſm, all that refines, exalts, ſoftens, embelliſhes, life—genius, virtue, love itſelf, languiſhes. But, on this ſubject, my opinions have not been lightly formed: —it is not to the perſonal graces, though 'the body charms, becauſe the mind is ſeen,' but to the virtues and talents of the

indivi-

individual (for without intellect, virtue is an empty name), that my heart does homage; and, were I never again to behold you—were you even the husband of another—my tenderness (a tenderness as innocent as it is lively) would never cease!

"But, methinks, I hear you say,—'Whither does all this tend, and what end does it propose?' Alas! this is a question I scarcely dare to ask myself!—Yet, allow me to request, that you will make me one promise, and resolve me one question:—ah! do not evade this enquiry; for much it imports me to have an explicit reply, lest, in indulging my own feelings, I should, unconsciously, plant a thorn in the bosom of another:—*Is your heart, at present, free?* Or should you, in future, form a tender engagement, tell me, that I shall receive the first intimation of it from yourself; and, in the assurance of your happiness, I will learn to forget my own.

"I aspire to no higher title than that of the most faithful of your friends, and the

the wiſh of becoming worthy of your eſteem and confidence ſhall afford me a motive for improvement. I will learn of you moderation, equanimity, and ſelf-command; and you will, perhaps, continue to afford me direction, and aſſiſtance, in the purſuit of knowledge and truth.

"I have laid down my pen, again and again, and ſtill taken it up to add ſomething more, from an anxiety, leſt even you, of whoſe delicacy I have experienced repeated proofs, ſhould miſconſtrue me. —'Oh! what a world is this!——into what falſe habits has it fallen! Can hypocriſy be virtue? Can a deſire to call forth all the beſt affections of the heart, be miſconſtrued into ſomething too degrading for expreſſion?'* But I will baniſh theſe apprehenſions; I am convinced they are injurious.

"Yes!—I repeat it—I relinquiſh my pen with reluctance. A melancholy ſatisfaction, from what ſource I can ſcarcely define, diffuſes itſelf through my heart

* Holcroft's Anna St. Ives.

while

while I unfold to you its emotions.—Write to me; *be ingenuous*; I deſire, I call for, truth!

"EMMA."

## CHAP. XXVI.

I HAD not courage to make my friend a confident of the ſtep I had taken; ſo wild, and ſo romantic, did it appear, even to myſelf—a falſe pride, a falſe ſhame, with-held me. I brooded in ſilence over the ſentiment, that preyed on the boſom which cheriſhed it. Every morning dawned with expectation, and every evening cloſed in diſappointment. I walked daily to the poſt-office, with precipitate ſteps and a throbbing heart, to enquire for letters, but in vain; and returned ſlow, dejected, ſpiritleſs. *Hope*, one hour, animated my boſom and fluſhed my cheek; the next, pale *deſpair* ſhed its torpid

torpid influence through my languid frame. Inquietude, at length, gradually gave place to deſpondency, and I ſunk into laſſitude.

My ſtudies no longer afforded me any pleaſure. I turned over my books, incapable of fixing my attention; took out my drawings, threw them aſide; moved, reſtleſs and diſſatisfied, from ſeat to ſeat; ſought, with unconſcious ſteps, the library, and throwing myſelf on the ſopha, with folded arms, fixed my eyes on the picture of Auguſtus, which had lately been replaced, and ſunk into waking dreams of ideal perfection and viſionary bliſs. I gazed on the lifeleſs features, engraven on my heart in colours yet more true and vivid—but where was the benignant ſmile, the intelligent glance, the varying expreſſion? Where the pleaſant voice, whoſe accents had been melody in my ear; that had cheered me in ſadneſs, diſpelled the vapours of diſtruſt and melancholy, and awakened my emulation for ſcience and improvement? Starting from a train of poignant and diſtreſſing

emotions, I fled from an apartment once ſo dear, preſenting now but the ghoſts of departed pleaſures—fled into the woods, and buried myſelf in their deepeſt receſſes; or, ſhutting myſelf in my chamber, avoided the ſight of my friend, whoſe dejected countenance but the more forcibly reminded me—

'That ſuch things were, and were moſt dear.'

In this ſtate of mind, looking one day over my papers, without any known end in view, I accidentally opened a letter from Mr. Francis (with whom I ſtill continued, occaſionally, to correſpond), which I had recently received. I eagerly ſeized, and re-peruſed, it. My ſpirits were weakened; the kindneſs which it expreſſed affected me—it touched my heart—it excited my tears. I determined inſtantly to reply to it, and to acknowledge my ſenſe of his goodneſs.

My mind was overwhelmed with the preſſure of its own thoughts; a gleam of joy darted through the thick miſts that pervaded

pervaded it; communication would relieve the burthen. I took up my pen, and, though I dared not betray the fatal ſecret concealed, as a ſacred treaſure, in the bottom of my heart, I yet gave a looſe to, I endeavoured to paint, its ſenſations.

After briefly ſketching the events that had driven me from Morton Park (of which I had not hitherto judged it neceſſary to inform him), without hinting the name of my deliverer, or ſuffering myſelf to dwell on the ſervices he had rendered me, I mentioned my preſent temporary reſidence at the houſe of a friend, and expreſſed an impatience at my ſolitary, inactive, ſituation.

I went on——" To what purpoſe ſhould I trouble you with a thouſand wayward, contradictory, ideas and emotions, that I am, myſelf, unable to diſentangle —which have, perhaps, floated in every mind, that has had leiſure for reflection —which are diſtinguiſhed by no originality, and which I may expreſs (though not feel) without force? I ſought to culti-

cultivate my underſtanding, and exerciſe my reaſon, that, by adding variety to my reſources, I might increaſe the number of my enjoyments: for *happineſs* is, ſurely, the only deſirable *end* of exiſtence! But when I aſk myſelf, Whether I am yet nearer to the end propoſed?—I dare not deceive myſelf—ſincerity obliges me to anſwer in the negative. I daily perceive the gay and the frivolous, among my ſex, amuſed with every paſſing trifle; gratified by the inſipid *routine* of heartleſs, mindleſs, intercourſe; fully occupied, alternately, by domeſtic employment, or the childiſh vanity of varying external ornaments, and 'hanging drapery on a ſmooth block.' I do not affect to deſpiſe, and I regularly practiſe, the neceſſary avocations of my ſex; neither am I ſuperior to their vanities. The habits acquired by early precept and example adhere tenaciouſly, and are never, perhaps, entirely eradicated. But all theſe are inſufficient to engroſs, to ſatisfy, the active, aſpiring, mind. Hemmed in on every ſide by the conſtitu-

conſtitutions of ſociety, and not leſs ſo, it may be, by my own prejudices—I perceive, indignantly perceive, the magic circle, without knowing how to diſſolve the powerful ſpell. While men purſue intereſt, honor, pleaſure, as accords with their ſeveral diſpoſitions, women, who have too much delicacy, ſenſe, and ſpirit, to degrade themſelves by the vileſt of all interchanges, remain inſulated beings, and muſt be content tamely to look on, without taking any part in the great, though often abſurd and tragical, drama of life. Hence the eccentricities of conduct, with which women of ſuperior minds have been accuſed—the ſtruggles, the deſpairing though generous ſtruggles, of an ardent ſpirit, denied a ſcope for its exertions! The ſtrong feelings, and ſtrong energies, which properly directed, in a field ſufficiently wide, might—ah! what might they not have aided? forced back, and pent up, ravage and deſtroy the mind which gave them birth!

"Yes, I confeſs, *I am unhappy*, unhappy in proportion as I believe myſelf (it may be, erringly) improved. Philoſophy, it is ſaid, ſhould regulate the feelings, but it has added fervor to mine! What are paſſions, but another name for powers? The mind capable of receiving the moſt forcible impreſſions is the ſublimely improveable mind! Yet, into whatever trains ſuch minds are accidentally directed, they are prone to enthuſiaſm, while the vulgar ſtupidly wonder at the effects of powers, to them wholly inconceivable: the weak and the timid, eaſily diſcouraged, are induced, by the firſt failure, to relinquiſh their purſuits. 'They make the impoſſibility they fear!' But the bold and the perſevering, from repeated diſappointment, derive only new ardor and activity. 'They conquer difficulties, by daring to attempt them.'

"I feel, that I am writing in a deſultory manner, that I am unable to crowd my ideas into the compaſs of a letter, and, that could I do ſo, I ſhould perhaps only

weary

weary you. There are but few perſons to whom I venture to complain, few would underſtand, and ſtill fewer ſympathiſe with me. You are in health, they would ſay, in the ſpring of life, have every thing ſupplied you without labour (ſo much the worſe) nature, reaſon, open to you their treaſures! All this is, partly, true—but, with inexpreſſible yearnings, my ſoul pants for ſomething more, ſomething higher! The morning riſes upon me with ſadneſs, and the evening cloſes with diſguſt—Imperfection, uncertainty, is impreſſed on every object, on every purſuit! I am either reſtleſs or torpid, I ſeek to-day, what to-morrow, wearies and offends me.

"I entered life, fluſhed with hope—I have proceeded but a few ſteps, and the parterre of roſes, viewed in diſtant proſpect, nearer ſeen, proves a brake of thorns. The few worthy perſons I have known appear, to me, to be ſtruggling with the ſame half ſuppreſſed emotions.—Whence is all this? Why is intellect and virtue ſo far from conferring happineſs? Why is the

active mind a prey to the inceſſant conflict between truth and error? Shall I look beyond the diſorders which, *here*, appear to me ſo inexplicable?—ſhall I expect, ſhall I demand, from the inſcrutable Being to whom I owe my exiſtence, in future unconceived periods, the *end* of which I believe myſelf capable, and which capacity, like a tormenting *ignis fatuus*, has hitherto ſerved only to torture and betray? The animal riſes up to ſatisfy the cravings of nature, and lies down to repoſe, undiſturbed by care—has man ſuperior powers, only to make him pre-eminently wretched?—wretched, it ſeems to me, in proportion as he riſes? Aſſiſt me, in diſentangling my bewildered ideas—write to me—reprove me—ſpare me not!

"EMMA."

To this letter I quickly received a kind and conſolatory reply, though not unmingled with the reproof I called for. It afforded me but a temporary relief, and I once more ſunk into inanity; my faculties ruſted for want of exerciſe, my reaſon

reaſon grew feeble, and my imagination morbid.

## CHAP. XXVII.

A PACQUET of letters, at length, arrived from London—Mrs. Harley, with a look that ſeemed to ſearch the ſoul, put one into my hands—The ſuperſcription bore the well known characters—yes, it was from Auguſtus, and addreſſed to Emma—I ran, with it, into my chamber, locked myſelf in, tore it almoſt aſunder with a tremulous hand, peruſed its contents with avidity—ſcarce daring to reſpire—I reperuſed it again and again.

"I had truſted my confeſſions (it ſaid) to one who had made the human heart his ſtudy, who could not be affected by them improperly. It ſpoke of the illuſions of the paſſions—of the falſe and

flattering medium through which they preſented objects to our view. He had anſwered my letter earlier, had it not involved him in too many thoughts to do it with eaſe. There was a great part of it to which he knew not how to reply—perhaps, on ſome ſubjects, it was not neceſſary to be explicit. And now, it may be, he had better be ſilent—he was diſſatisfied with what he had written, but, were he to write again, he doubted if he ſhould pleaſe himſelf any better.—He was highly flattered by the favourable opinion I entertained of him, it was a grateful proof, not of his merit, but of the warmth of my friendſhip, &c. &c."

This letter appeared to me vague, obſcure, enigmatical. Unſatisfied, diſappointed, I felt, I had little to hope—and, yet, had no *diſtinct* ground of fear. I brooded over it, I tortured its meaning into a hundred forms—I ſpake of it to my friend, but in general terms, in which ſhe ſeemed to acquieſce: ſhe appeared to have made a determination, not to enquire

quire after what I was unwilling to diſcloſe; ſhe wholly confided both in my principles, and in thoſe of her ſon: I was wounded by what, entangled in prejudice, I conceived to be a neceſſity for this reſerve.

Again I addreſſed the man, whoſe image, in the abſence of all other impreſſions, I had ſuffered to gain in my mind this dangerous aſcendency.

TO AUGUSTUS HARLEY.

"I, ONCE more, take up my pen with a mind ſo full of thought, that I foreſee I am about to treſpaſs on your time and patience—yet, perhaps, to one who makes 'the human heart his ſtudy,' it may not be wholly unintereſting to trace a faithful delineation of the emotions and ſentiments of an ingenuous, uncorrupted, mind—a mind formed by ſolitude, and habits of reflection, to ſome ſtrength of character.

"If

"If to have been more guarded and reſerved would have been more diſcreet, I have already forfeited all claim to this diſcretion—to affect it now, would be vain, and, by purſuing a middle courſe, I ſhould reſign the only advantage I may ever derive from my ſincerity, the advantage of expreſſing my thoughts and feelings with freedom.

"The conduct, which I have been led to adopt, has been the reſult of a combination of peculiar circumſtances, *and is not what I would recommend to general imitation*—To ſay nothing of the hazards it might involve, I am aware, generally ſpeaking, arguments might be adduced, to prove, that certain cuſtoms, of which I, yet, think there is reaſon to complain, may not have been unfounded in nature—I am led to ſpeak thus, becauſe I am not willing to ſpare myſelf, but would alledge all which you might have felt inclined to hint, had you not been with-held by motives of delicate conſideration.

"Of

"Of what then, you may aſk, do I complain?—Not of the laws of nature! But when mind has given dignity to natural affections; when reaſon, culture, taſte, and delicacy, have combined to chaſten, to refine, to exalt (ſhall I ſay) to ſanctify them—Is there, then, no cauſe to complain of rigor and ſeverity, that ſuch minds muſt either paſſively ſubmit to a vile traffic, or be content to relinquiſh all the endearing ſympathies of life? Nature has formed woman peculiarly ſuſceptible of the tender affections. 'The voice of nature is too ſtrong to be ſilenced by artificial precepts.' To feel theſe affections in a ſupreme degree, a mind enriched by literature and expanded by fancy and reflection, is neceſſary—for it is intellect and imagination only, that can give energy and intereſt to——

'The thouſand ſoft ſenſations—'
'Which vulgar ſouls want faculties to taſte,
'Who take their good and evil in the groſs.'

"I wiſh we were in the vehicular ſtate, and that you underſtood the ſentient lan-

guage;

guage;* you might then comprehend the whole of what I mean to expreſs, but find too delicate for *words*. But I do you injuſtice.

"If the affections are, indeed, generated by ſympathy, where the principles, purſuits, and habits, are congenial—where the *end*, ſought to be attained, is—

'Something, than beauty dearer,'

"You may, perhaps, agree with me, that it is *almoſt* indifferent on which ſide the ſentiment originates. Yet, I confeſs, my frankneſs has involved me in many after thoughts and inquietudes; inquietudes, which all my reaſoning is, at times, inſufficient to allay. The ſhame of being ſingular, it has been juſtly obſerved,† requires ſtrong principles, and much native firmneſs of temper, to ſurmount.—Thoſe who deviate from the beaten track muſt expect to be entangled in the thic-

* See Light of Nature purſued. An entertaining philoſophical work.

† Aikin's Letters.

ket,

ket, and wounded by many a thorn—my wandering feet have already been deeply pierced.

"I ſhould vainly attempt to deſcribe the ſtruggles, the ſolicitudes, the doubts, the apprehenſions, that alternately rend my heart! I feel, that I have "put to ſea upon a ſhattered plank, and placed my truſt in miracles for ſafety." I dread, one moment, leſt, in attempting to awaken your tenderneſs, I may have forfeited your reſpect; the next, that I have miſtaken a deluſive meteor for the ſober light of reaſon. In retirement, numberleſs contradictory emotions revolve in my diſturbed mind:—in company, I ſtart and ſhudder from accidental alluſions, in which no one but myſelf could trace any application. The end of doubt is the beginning of repoſe. Say, then, to me, that it is a principle in human nature, however ungenerous, to eſteem lightly what may be attained without difficulty. —Tell me to make diſtinctions between love and friendſhip, of which I have, hitherto, been able to form no idea.—

Say, that the former is the caprice of fancy, founded on external graces, to which I have little pretenſion, and that it is vain to pretend, that—

'Truth and good are one,
And beauty dwells with them.'

"Tell me, that I have indulged too long the wild and extravagant chimeras of a romantic imagination. Let us walk together into the palace of Truth, where (it is fancifully related by an ingenious writer,* that) every one was compelled by an irreſiſtible, controuling, power, to reveal his inmoſt ſentiments! All this I will bear, and will ſtill reſpect your integrity, and confide in your principles; but I can no longer ſuſtain a ſuſpenſe that preys upon my ſpirits. It is not the Book of Fate—it is your mind, only, I deſire to read. A ſickly apprehenſion overſpreads my heart———I pauſe here, unable to proceed."

"EMMA."

* Madame de Genlis's Tales of the Caſtle.

CHAP.

## CHAP. XXVIII.

WEEK after week, month after month, paſſed away in the anguiſh of vain expectation: my letter was not anſwered, and I again ſunk into deſpondency.—Winter drew near. I ſhuddered at the approach of this dreary and deſolate ſeaſon, when I was rouſed by the receipt of a letter from one of the daughters of the maternal aunt, under whoſe care I had ſpent the happy, thoughtleſs, days of childhood. My couſin informed me—

"That ſhe had married an officer in the Eaſt India ſervice; that ſoon after their union he was ordered abroad, and ſtationed in Bengal for three years, during which period ſhe was to remain in a commodious and pleaſant houſe, ſituated in the vicinity of the metropolis. She had been informed of my removal from Morton Park, and had no doubt but I ſhould be able to give a ſatisfactory account of the occaſion of that removal.

She purpoſed, during the abſence of her huſband, to let out a part of her houſe; and ſhould I not be fixed in my preſent reſidence, would be happy to accommodate me with an apartment, on terms that ſhould be rather dictated by friendſhip than intereſt. She alſo hinted, that a neighbouring lady, of reſpectable character, would be glad to avail herſelf of the occaſional aſſiſtance of an accompliſhed woman in the education of her daughters; that ſhe had mentioned me to her in advantageous terms, conceiving that I ſhould have no objection, by ſuch a means, to exerciſe my talents, to render myſelf uſeful, and to augment my ſmall income."

This intelligence filled me with delight: the idea of change, of exertion, of new ſcenes—ſhall I add, *of breathing the ſame air with Auguſtus*, ruſhed tumultuouſly through my imagination. Flying eagerly to my friend, to impart theſe tidings, I was not aware of the ungrateful and inconſiderate appearance which theſe exultations muſt give me in her

eyes, till I perceived the ſtarting tear.—It touched, it electrified, my heart; and, throwing myſelf into her arms, I caught the ſoft contagion, and wept aloud.

"Go, Emma—my daughter," ſaid this excellent woman; "I baniſh the ſelfiſh "regret that would prompt me to detain "thee. I perceive this ſolitude is de-"ſtructive to thy ardent mind. Go, vary "your impreſſions, and expand your ſen-"ſations; gladden me only from time to "time with an account of your progreſs "and welfare."

I had but little preparation to make. I canvaſſed over, with my friend, a thouſand plans, and formed as many expectations and conjectures; but they all ſecretly tended to one point, and concentrated in one object. I gave my couſin notice that I ſhould be with her in a few days—ſettled a future correſpondence with my friend—embraced her, at parting, with unfeigned, and tender, ſorrow—and, placing myſelf in a ſtage-coach, that paſſed daily through the village, took the road, once more, with a fluttering heart, to London. We travelled

travelled all night—it was cold and dreary —but my fancy was buſied with various images, and my boſom throbbing with lively, though indiſtinct ſenſations.

The next day, at noon, I arrived, without accident, at the reſidence of my relation, Mrs. Denbeigh. She received me with unaffected cordiality: our former amity was renewed; we ſpent the evening together, recalling paſt ſcenes; and, on retiring, I was ſhewn into a neat chamber, which had been prepared for me, with a light cloſet adjoining. The next day, I was introduced to the lady, mentioned to me by my kind hoſteſs, and agreed to devote three mornings in the week to the inſtruction of the young ladies (her daughters), in various branches of education.

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END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.